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ABSTRACT

This document contains 11 papers on school staff development: (1) "The Staff Development for School Improvement Program" (Winifred I. Warnat); (2) "A Teacher's View of a Staff Development Project" (Lynn Kleiman); (3) "Staff Development from the Principal's Perspective" (Dixie Hibner); (4) "Stepping-Stones to Success" (Barbara A. Skone); (5) "Benefits of Staff Development Projects for Downsized Schools" (Gerald L. Jennings); (6) "Boosting Morale and Improving Communications" (Alethea Helbig); (7) "Reflections on How to Be a Successful University Facilitator" (Beth Van Voorhees); (8) "University-Public School Collaboration: A Personal Perspective" (Marylyn Lake); (9) "Personal Reflections of a Staff Development Coordinator" (Larry J. Thomas); (10) "An Outsider's Critique of the Program" (Roy A. Edelfelt); and (11) "The Role of Qualitative Methods in Evaluation" (Ronald G. Corwin). (CJ)

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Staff Development for School Improvement:

An Illustration

Roy A. Edelfelt, Editor

NATIONAL CENTER ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

SP 022 372

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DISTRICTS AND SCHOOLS PARTICIPATING IN THE STAFF DEVELOPMENT FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM, 1981–82

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Chelsea School District	North Elementary School
Dearborn Public Schools	William Ford Elementary School
Dexter Community Schools	Bates-Copeland Elementary School Wiley Junior High School
Garden City Public Schools	Farmington Elementary School
Inkster Public Schools	Frazier Elementary School Fellrath Junior High School
Lincoln Consolidated Schools	Lincoln Junior High School
Milan Area Schools	Milan High School
Monroe Public Schools	Librarians, district wide
Saline Area Schools	Jensen Elementary School
Taylor School District	Secondary school English teachers, district wide
Wayne-Westland Community Schools	Walker Elementary School
Whitmore Lake Public Schools	Spencer Elementary School
Willow Run Community Schools	Willow Run High School
Ypsilanti Public Schools	Adams Elementary School Ardis Elementary School

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Staff Development for School Improvement: An Illustration

Roy A. Edelfelt, Editor

NATIONAL CENTER ON TEACHING AND LEARNING
EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

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Eastern Michigan University
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197

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To
Geneva Titsworth,
whose commitment to staff development
made this program possible.

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1

The Staff Development for School Improvement Program

Winifred I. Warnat

A primary concern of public schools today is school improvement. While attention is focused on improving the performance of children and youth in the classroom, especially in the fundamental skills, other elements important to improving schools tend to be overlooked, among them, staff development. The Staff Development for School Improvement (SDSI) program, which is part of the National Center on Teaching and Learning (NCTL) at Eastern Michigan University (EMU), is a unique experiment in school-university collaboration. Through staff development the program attempts to improve schools by attending to many elements of the organization we call school.

The program is designed to provide school staffs with the skills and the procedures they need to identify and address their most pressing problems. It is based on the premise that classroom teachers can best address their needs, identify their priorities, and plan a program to meet their needs and priorities at the building level. To carry out the program, EMU involves faculty from several of its colleges as facilitators in local schools (18 in 1981–82).

The program originated in 1974 in Michigan's Taylor School District. As it has spread to other districts through EMU's involvement, the model has continued to develop. The program has flourished primarily because the school staffs have had the responsibility for planning, implementing, and evaluating their own staff development. Local ownership of the staff development program is key, and the endorsement of the program by both administrators and teachers is essential. We attribute much of the success of the program to the use of a six-step process. Critical, however, is whether the process produces improvements—whether teachers feel better

Winifred I. Warnat is the director of the National Center on Teaching and Learning, Eastern Michigan University.

about what they are doing, whether the school program has improved. We are concerned about two kinds of outcomes, two kinds of institutionalization: (1) the adoption of a staff development process and (2) the adoption in the school of improvements resulting from staff development.

Collaboration is another characteristic of the program. Collaboration involves cooperation among school staff, local and intermediate school district personnel, Michigan Department of Education staff, and EMU personnel. A collaborative advisory committee representing all these organizations helps guide the program. Funds appropriated especially for the program are provided by the Michigan legislature. These funds enable EMU to employ facilitators, provide money to schools for staff development, and support the administration of the program.

PRELIMINARY STEPS

A school district or an individual school may learn about the program from the state department of education, the university, an intermediate school district, a local school district, or an individual teacher. Once a district indicates an interest in the program, a university facilitator or another program representative from the university makes a presentation. The initial contact is with the district's central administration and the local teacher organization. The commitment of both the administration and the teacher organization is essential at the point of entry if the program is to go forward. Following such approval, information about the program is shared with the local professional development policy board.[1] The policy board (or central administration) then selects candidate schools for involvement.

Next, the district's professional development coordinator (or someone comparable) and a university facilitator explore the requirements and the possibilities of the program with the principals of the candidate schools. This gives principals a chance to raise questions about the six-step process and its contributions to school improvement. Principals then decide whether they are interested in having their staff participate. If so, they request a presentation about the program to the school staff. The request is not a commitment of staff participation, however.

THE SIX-STEP PROCESS

The essence of the Staff Development for School Improvement program is constructive change in a school through shared decision making at the

1. Although many states do not require the establishment of professional development policy boards, such boards were mandated by the Michigan Department of Education in 1979 for local or intermediate school districts receiving funds for professional development from the department.

school-building level. The six-step process provides a vehicle for such change to occur. School improvement is its focus; staff development is the process. The staff development program is based on five assumptions:

1. The school building is the key unit to effect constructive change.

2. The school staff must be actively involved in determining how change (improvement) will occur.

3. Ownership of and commitment to the change process by the school staff are essential. They are natural by-products of shared planning and decision making.

4. Such change contributes to an improved learning climate—improvement of the instructional performance of teachers and the academic performance of students.

5. Staff development using the six-step process contributes to school improvement.

Table 1 is a diagram of the six-step process.

Step 1—Awareness, Readiness, and Commitment

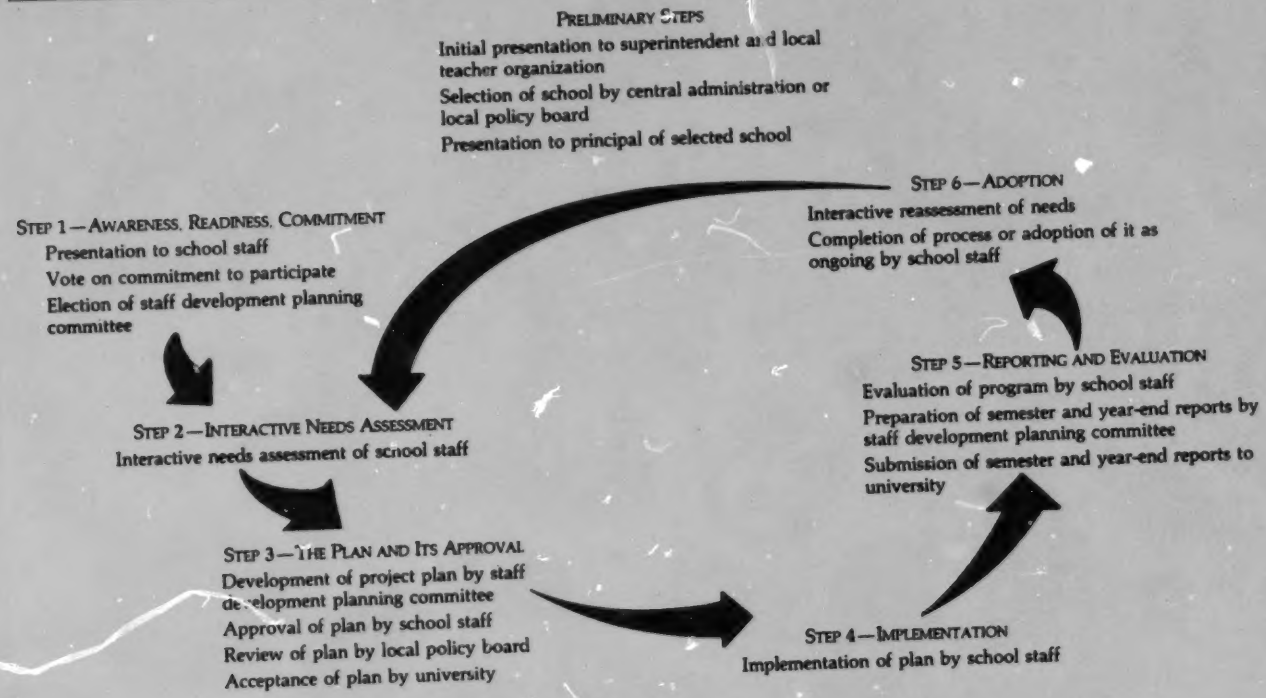
The initial session with a school staff is conducted by the university facilitator and the district coordinator. The session includes (1) a brief history of the program, (2) a statement of the program's purpose and its basic assumptions, (3) an explanation of the six-step process, and (4) a description of the expected outcomes and benefits of a school-building project. After they have had an opportunity to explore the potential and the requirements of the program, the staff vote by secret ballot on whether to participate. *A 75-percent vote in favor of participating is required for a school staff to become involved in the program.*

Developing readiness in a school staff may take some time, entailing more than one awareness session and much probing. When a school staff are not ready to vote after an initial session, they may decide to meet again or may choose to have a task force explore further the desirability of participating. Additional information is usually obtained from the university facilitator and the district coordinator. When the probing is completed, a report is made to the school staff for further discussion. If they feel ready, they vote on whether to participate.

Step 2—Interactive Needs Assessment

To identify needs and put them in priority order, the school staff participate in an interactive needs assessment. It is conducted by an outside consultant who is skilled in the interactive process. A variety of needs assessment approaches may be used. Through this process school staff members—

TABLE 1
THE SIX-STEP PROCESS


PRELIMINARY STEPS
Initial presentation to superintendent and local teacher organization
Selection of school by central administration or local policy board
Presentation to principal of selected school
STEP 1—AWARENESS, READINESS, COMMITMENT
Presentation to school staff
Vote on commitment to participate
Election of staff development planning committee
STEP 2—INTERACTIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT
Interactive needs assessment of school staff
STEP 3—THE PLAN AND ITS APPROVAL
Development of project plan by staff development planning committee
Approval of plan by school staff
Review of plan by local policy board
Acceptance of plan by university
STEP 4—IMPLEMENTATION
Implementation of plan by school staff
STEP 5—REPORTING AND EVALUATION
Evaluation of program by school staff
Preparation of semester and year-end reports by staff development planning committee
Submission of semester and year-end reports to university
STEP 6—ADOPTION
Interactive reassessment of needs
Completion of process or adoption of it as ongoing by school staff

1. identify needs they consider critical;
2. reach agreement on needs considered most critical;
3. establish a priority to address those needs through staff development;
4. identify factors that may influence or interfere with accomplishing the priority;
5. select a staff development planning committee.

The staff development planning committee typically consists of five to seven members, usually (1) two teachers elected by their colleagues, (2) one resource teacher, reading teacher, counselor, or other staff member who is a member of the teachers' bargaining unit, (3) the building principal or the assistant principal, and (4) the university facilitator. A parent representative may also be included.

Step 3—The Plan and Its Approval

The staff development planning committee, with input from the school staff, is responsible for developing a written plan for a staff development project. Substitute teachers free teacher-members to work on the plan. Committees often develop the plan through a series of work sessions, in which they get help as needed from the university facilitator. Constant interaction with the total school staff is necessary and typically entails several meetings at which all staff members make suggestions for the proposed program. Although the design of the plan may take several forms, each plan includes (1) a statement of the priority goal, (2) project objectives, (3) action strategies (activities), (4) expected outcomes (change/improvement), (5) time lines and a schedule of events, (6) evaluation procedures, (7) human and material resources needed, and (8) a detailed budget.

Approval of the plan involves consensus among the school staff, a review by the district policy board, and acceptance by EMU. If any content or procedural changes are suggested by any one of the three groups, the plan goes back to the staff development planning committee for modification. In most instances, approval of the plan is assured because the school staff and the university facilitator have been in constant contact with the planning committee throughout the plan's development.

Step 4—Implementation

A basic premise of the program is that effective staff development inevitably contributes to improvement in curriculum and instruction as well as in student performance, and thus to improvement in the learning milieu of the school. Implementation is the phase in which the goals and the objectives presented in the project plan are carried out. Its focus is on the staff

development activities of the school staff, be they workshops, on-the-job study, analysis of and actions on a new teaching technique, curriculum development in a content field, school visitation to observe successful practice, or the use of outside consultants with expertise in an area of critical need. Keeping track of the project's progress in reaching its objectives is an integral part of implementation. Because the plan describes what implementation should be, it serves as a guide against which to check what actually happens.

The school year (September to June) is the time frame for the entire staff development project. The fourth step, implementation, typically takes three to six months.

Step 5—Reporting and Evaluation

Program evaluation is viewed as a continuous process and is designed to determine the degree to which the goals and the objectives are being accomplished. The concern is with five categories of outcomes:

1. The knowledge, the skills, and the attitudes that the participants learn
2. The changes in behavior caused by the knowledge, the skills, and the attitudes that the participants learn
3. The changes in curriculum, management, and school organization caused by what the participants learn
4. The changes or the improvement in students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes and the changes in students' behavior caused by numbers 1, 2, and 3
5. The impact on the community.

To assure that varied and comprehensive data about the project are considered, both quantitative and qualitative information is gathered and assessed. The school staff are responsible for evaluation of their own project; the university facilitator provides assistance as needed. The staff are encouraged to collect and record evidence in the five categories. Semester and year-end reports, which bring together all information collected as an assessment of accomplishments, are required.

The planning committee makes progress reports to the school staff and the district policy board monthly. The committee meets regularly for the duration of the project to coordinate each of the six steps. Preparation of semester and year-end reports is also the responsibility of the committee.

Step 6—Adoption

Implementation extends to the application of what has been learned, such as instituting a new curriculum or new teaching strategies, applying the professional techniques learned, and adopting the materials developed.

The ultimate question is, Has staff development caused school improvement?

Adoption of the six-step process as an ongoing procedure by the school staff indicates an interest and a willingness to assume greater responsibility for staff development and school improvement. Adoption or institutionalization of the staff development process is documented when the school staff continue using the six-step process by moving into another staff development project in a subsequent year.

When a year-long project has been completed, a concluding interactive needs assessment is conducted. This needs assessment builds on the knowledge, the skills, and the attitudes that have been learned as a result of the project. It includes examining the effectiveness of the project. It also usually results in identifying new needs, and that is the beginning of another staff development project. The six-step process can then be repeated.

QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

The focus of the school-building staff development model is staff development for school improvement, not inservice education for individual-professional growth. Its primary emphasis is on developing better programs for students by supporting teachers and administrators in their work to improve curriculums, develop more effective teaching strategies, and create better learning climates. Improving the quality of schooling—the quality of the experiences students have under the auspices of the school and the results of those experiences—is its first consideration.

Describing the program succinctly may suggest that everything is well ordered and extraordinarily successful. As with any human endeavor, that is hardly the case. We have enjoyed success, but not without difficulty and travail, and we continue to approach the program with a range of questions. Can university and school people really work together collegially? Can the traditional superior-subordinate posturing so common in university-school relations be overcome? Can the Staff Development for School Improvement program contribute to university-faculty development as well as school improvement? What support should be provided to the university faculty involved? What incentives are needed to ensure their participation? What will make the program run more smoothly? How can the enthusiasm of the participating schools and faculties be sustained for an entire year? What incentives and rewards are needed for school faculties to continue their enthusiasm for the program? Can our program contribute to institutional change at both the school and the university level? In addition to such questions, we have some other concerns.

Staffing. As a university-based program that serves schools, SDSI needs a staff sensitive to the needs and the temperaments of school personnel, especially classroom teachers. This past year we had such a staff: a coordinator who came from a local school district; seven university faculty who represented EMU's Colleges of Education, Human Services, Technology, and Arts and Sciences; and an outside evaluation consultant with expertise in the inservice education of teachers, who met with us monthly. A unique aspect of the university faculty was that they agreed to serve as process consultants—facilitators—rather than as the traditional content experts. How to function in that capacity unfolded as the program evolved.

Understanding the program. Because all of us were new to the program, much of the year's efforts involved interpretation of the program at each step of the way. All of us learned as we went along. Change was constant. Table 2 describes for 1981–82 how and at what point various individuals and groups were involved in the process.

Conflicts between precedents and new developments. Some schools had been involved in prior programs sponsored by EMU and were in a stage of continuation. Other schools were brand new to the program. During the year the program was evolving. Some old practices were altered, some were sharpened and refined, some were abandoned. Meanwhile, school staffs were doing all sorts of exciting projects, such as creating teaching techniques, making communications better, learning to use the microcomputer, changing the system for reporting student progress, establishing media resource centers, improving student behavior, fashioning an English curriculum, and using parents as volunteers. Many school people were obviously very turned on by their projects, and university facilitators were stimulated by their experiences with school people. The program was working!

WHAT THIS MONOGRAPH IS ABOUT

This monograph pulls together reports and revelations about the Staff Development for School Improvement program from a teacher, a principal, a district coordinator, four university facilitators, the program coordinator, and the evaluation consultant. In sharing these perspectives, I hope that, along with your becoming informed about a model of staff development that focuses on school improvement, you will be inspired by the story of real educators addressing their problems, even as you recognize again that improvement is a slow and difficult process.

The appendix contains a commissioned paper on qualitative research,

TABLE 2
INVOLVEMENT IN THE SIX-STEP PROCESS

	THE SEQUENCE	REPRESENTATIVES											
		Superintendent	Principal	District Coordinator	University Facilitator	University Consultant	Teachers	Parents and Citizens	District Policy Board	University	Building Committee	Teacher Organization	Intermediate Service Agency
PRELIMINARY STEPS	– 5 The beginning	✓		O	O			O	O	✓		✓	
	– 4 Probe interest, identify possible buildings								✓				
	– 3 Explore principal's interest	X	✓	O	✓				O				
	– 2 Present to building staff	X	✓	O	✓								
	– 1 Explore and discuss with teachers		✓	O	✓		✓				✓		
	0 Call for a vote of teachers	X	✓	X	✓		✓		X	X			
ACTION STEPS	1 Develop awareness		✓		✓	O	✓	O			O		O
	2 Assess needs		✓	X	✓	O	✓		X		✓		O
	3 Prepare plan and get it approved	X	✓	X	✓		✓	O	✓	✓	✓		
	4 Implement plan		✓	X	✓	O	✓	O	X		✓		O
	5 Report and evaluate	X	✓	X	✓	O	✓	O	X	X	✓		O
	6 Adopt what has been learned	X	✓	O	✓		✓		O	X	✓		

Legend: ✓ = directly involved, X = kept informed, O = may be involved

written by an outside consultant. The subject of qualitative research became increasingly important to the university facilitators as their documentation of projects became more sophisticated. The consultant was brought in to discuss the subject with the facilitators, he prepared the paper as a basis for the discussion.

2

A Teacher's View of a Staff Development Project

Lynn Kleiman

The depression in Michigan has led to severe cutbacks at Walker Elementary School, located in the Wayne-Westland Community School District in the heartland of Michigan's automotive industry. The staff have responded with a parent-volunteer program developed using the Staff Development for School Improvement process. What better way to improve our capabilities to help our students achieve than by getting parents involved in school activities? The impact of the program on overall school-and-community relations has been broad. Communications among staff have improved. Teachers and students, students and parents, staff and parents, parents and administrators, administrators and teachers, have increased their understanding of each other through greater activity, discussion, and sharing of goals. The program has led to a Walker School community consisting of the 20 staff, the 323 students, their families, and even a few volunteers who have no children at our school but live in the school area.

Perhaps the best way to describe how the program affected the staff is to report the procedures followed in developing our project.

GETTING STARTED

The first step was the staff's becoming aware of the Staff Development for School Improvement program and voting by more than 75 percent to participate. Shortly thereafter, we met for three hours to do a needs assessment. Small groups of four or five members brainstormed project ideas. The room buzzed with interaction, the sharing of ideas and information. Among the ideas generated were motivation of the average student, a school store, a pooling of resources and materials, development of high-

Lynn Kleiman is a special education teacher at Walker Elementary School in Canton, Michigan. She chaired the school's staff development planning committee.

interest low-vocabulary materials, and development of a parent-volunteer program. Through discussion we discovered that we could implement many if not all of the suggested ideas through the creative use of volunteers. A vote was taken, and the volunteer program was the highest priority. A building committee of five teacher-volunteers and the principal was formed to draft a plan.

The three-hour high-energy session was an important beginning. Unlike many school meetings, this one required that people talk with one another, listen, and participate in the search for consensus on a goal. People communicated their ideas, discussed their feelings about the school's needs, and defined a common goal for the group. Following the brainstorming, discussions continued in the hallways and the lounge, over coffee in the morning and lunch at noon. The building became alive with energy. People asked questions and exchanged notions of how the program might affect their classroom, student progress, and available resources.

DEVELOPING A PLAN

Next, with the guidance of a facilitator (a professor) from Eastern Michigan University, the building committee developed a plan of action to present to the staff. The principal was very supportive and an important member of the committee. A chairperson and a secretary were selected at the first of a series of weekly committee meetings. The committee became the project's leadership group. It proved to be hardworking, and small enough to make much discussion possible as hard-core tasks were accomplished.

The overall goal, to develop a parent-volunteer program, needed a solid plan, which the committee was able to build. The plan focused on the following objectives:

1. The school staff will develop a parent-volunteer recruitment plan.
2. The school staff will develop job descriptions for the activities in which parent-volunteers can be involved.
3. The school staff will train the volunteers to participate successfully in the activities.
4. The school staff will initiate as many activities as possible by the end of the 1981–82 school year.

IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

To begin to carry out this plan, the committee designed a bulletin board on which new developments in the project could be announced and graffiti sheets could be posted for the staff's responses. In addition, a meeting was

held to share committee progress, take a vote of support for the plan, and give the staff an opportunity to sign up to develop a job description for a parent-volunteer activity. The following activities for parent involvement were identified as a result of staff's assuming responsibility for that aspect of the project:

Prekindergarten screening
Organizing reading and math resources and materials
Computer awareness
Visual vocabulary
Problem solving
Math
The construction of games and aids for the basal reading series
Student motivation
Classroom volunteers
Creative development
A student-run school store.

In addition, a communications committee was formed to create fliers, posters, buttons, and other publicity materials, and a recruitment committee was formed to plan and decorate a volunteer room, provide refreshments at a parent open house, and organize an end-of-year thank-you luncheon. The school secretary handled typing and reproduced needed communications.

Nearly all the staff volunteered for responsibilities, and the halls echoed with enthusiasm. People ignored the 8:20 a.m. school-starting time; the parking lot was full at 7:30 a.m. Committees met to share ideas on given topics. Teachers discussed how the project could improve their teaching, the success of their students, and their working relationships with other teachers, students, and parents. A new sense of camaraderie and professionalism developed through pursuit of a common goal. Teachers were interacting and communicating!

Once the job descriptions for parent-volunteers were complete, the task of recruiting parents was at hand. The central committee, armed with the project title, Hands on Kids, and a project logo, began plans for informing students and parents about the new volunteer program.

For over a week, teachers wore buttons bearing the logo, refusing to tell students what it stood for but encouraging them to discuss it among friends and guess. An assembly was held to explain to students all of the exciting programs we could make available to them with the help of their parents. All students left the assembly with their own button and an invitation to their parents to attend a parent open house. Much enthusiasm

was generated as the children began to question one another and their teacher in an attempt to understand what Hands on Kids had in store for them.

Planning for the parent open house was done with great care: This meeting would make or break the program. The recruitment committee developed forms for teachers to sign up to supply refreshments and for parents to volunteer for specific activities. The communications committee, along with a central committee member, developed a parent handbook. It was important to emphasize to parents that we developed Hands on Kids to enhance the students' educational experiences, not to lighten our jobs as teachers.

The open house was held two weeks late because of an unexpected April snowstorm that was followed by spring break. Approximately 60 parents and over 75 percent of the school staff attended. With the aid of an overhead projector, the principal and several teachers explained the project. The parents were given the opportunity to ask questions in the meeting and informally over coffee and snacks. The evening provided a good setting for discussion, and 35 parents volunteered to participate. They expressed interest in the following activities, which began soon afterward:

Prekindergarten screening

Organizing reading and math resources and materials

Visual vocabulary

The construction of games and aids for the basal reading series

Classroom volunteers

Student motivation and creative development

A student-run school store.

Science and social studies learning centers, computer-awareness activities and the math project were to begin in fall 1983, these requiring more time, space, and/or equipment than could be planned for immediately following the parent open house.

A parent handbook was developed to give the parents enough basic information to feel more comfortable in the school. It proved to be an excellent means of answering the key questions, What is a school volunteer? and Why have school volunteers? In addition, it listed various volunteer jobs, laid out general guidelines, offered some tips on working with students, and discussed the value of volunteering. The handbook was used by teachers in training the volunteers.

A committee for each activity was responsible for contacting parents who volunteered and arranging for a training session. The staff wanted

parents to feel comfortable working in the building, so an effort was made to familiarize the parents with how the school operated, where to find the materials they needed, whom to see about problems that might arise, and how to perform their volunteer task.

Suddenly the school swelled with extra helpers. Students were excited at getting extra time with an adult tutor or at earning time to work on creative projects of their own choice. They increased their efforts in school as a result of both activities. Children beamed with pride at the sight of mom or dad in school. Staff and volunteers experienced a sense of satisfaction with their accomplishments in implementing various activities. Teachers had more time to concentrate on the professional tasks of teaching and on student learning and achievement. Parents actively involved in school began to better understand the school as an educational institution. For example, working around teachers for a time gave them a greater appreciation of the complexity of teaching.

The final activity of the school year was a recognition luncheon hosted by the Walker staff for volunteers. The volunteers were given a certificate of recognition and personal thanks from the Walker staff. Everyone shared a sense of school pride and accomplishment.

PROBLEMS AND BENEFITS

Problems have been minimal. We have learned that we must be more explicit with the volunteers in defining tasks. Also, teachers need more time to train volunteers because such tasks as scheduling of activities can be problematic. Finally, it would be helpful to have systematic follow-up on the communications to parents.

Regarding the impact of the project, it is obvious that not only staff but also students and parents have been affected in many positive ways. From Hands on Kids there has grown a network of communications, a sense of community, greater understanding among those involved, and, most important, increased student motivation and progress.

Benefits for the Staff

From the staff's perspective, new knowledge, skills, and attitudes have developed affecting behavior and causing change in individual teaching and curriculums. Early in the project teachers commented frequently on the increased exchange of ideas, the enthusiasm, the renewed interest, and the staff's willingness to become involved. We were more aware of what was going on around the building. Many of us, in doing the research necessary to develop the individual program activities, gained valuable knowledge regarding resources available in the Walker community, the

school district, and the intermediate school district. Some of this knowledge—about computers, for example—has had direct application in the classroom. The positive attitudes and the enthusiasm of the involved staff have begun to feed into the classroom, rubbing off on the students.

Several months into the project, staff had a clearer sense of the impact of Hands on Kids. We had a feeling of increased professionalism and cooperation, and enthusiasm among staff continued. The expression "school community" was used frequently to describe what was previously the Walker staff, the student body, and the parents. Teachers expressed satisfaction with having more time to work individually and in small groups with their students and being able to use more games and hands-on materials in class because there was additional help from volunteers. Teachers began to reward students more, using the classroom-volunteers activity and the motivation projects (gardening, art projects, games, gym, etc.) as incentives. Having parents in the classroom motivated us to be well organized and gave us an opportunity to help volunteers gain a better understanding of the classroom and our roles as teachers. In addition, several projects involved organizing materials, running dittos, and making games. These projects increased both teaching time and available resources.

In a year-end evaluation, four months into the Hands on Kids project, teachers commented on how communications among staff were affected as well as communications between staff and parents. Many statements described increased interaction and sharing among staff. In addition, there was more "helping between staff members." In regard to parents' learning, teachers felt that parents had gained a better understanding of the amount of time it took for teachers to deal effectively with students and to plan. More notes were sent home, more phone calls took place between home and school, and the frequency of informal discussions between staff and parents increased. Parents and teachers shared a purpose and worked together. Some staff members reported that parents appeared more comfortable in the school setting and expressed a desire to continue working on Hands on Kids activities.

Benefits for the Students

Student motivation and enthusiasm increased as a result of the project. This is expressed in many of the following student comments recorded by teachers:

> "It was fun for everybody because you could help with jobs or do a project."
>
> "The volunteer in our classroom was nice and could help us with our work when Mr. Howton was working with others."

"It was the best time."

"The volunteer helps us review our work so we don't forget. She helps us use the dictionary and read out loud. I like it."

"Boy, I'm going to get to work so I can go [to a motivation project]."

"When is she [the volunteer] coming again?"

"You can walk down to the school store to buy supplies instead of having to go to a store."

"The motivation [class] is just like going to art, which I like."

"Having Hands on Kids in our school gives you a better education."

Benefits for the Parent-Volunteers

How were the volunteers affected by their experience? At the year-end luncheon for volunteers, we collected parents' comments regarding Hands on Kids. They were overwhelmingly positive as reflected in the following examples:

"I thoroughly enjoyed working with your group, and I'm looking forward to next year. Thank you for letting me help."

"I feel very good about this program. I feel much more confident about my children attending school at Walker than I did at the beginning of the year."

"I enjoyed working with everyone. They all made me feel right at home. I will be willing to help in any way next year."

"I had a lot of fun this year, and I would like to thank Walker School for doing the best job possible for their students."

"Thank you for the chance to be involved."

"I would like to stay with the small children. I feel I can do my best there. They have made me feel needed and loved!"

"Thank you for the luncheon. I've never been shown so much gratitude over a couple hours of work. That tells me teachers do appreciate a little help."

"You can see a change in the children as they receive help. Their whole attitude changes for the positive when they know they can do the work. And the volunteers realize what goes on in and around the room and school. You have no idea what a joy it is when a child says, 'I did it!' when they thought they could not do it at all."

Parents expressed a sense of accomplishment. They learned some new skills and gained a better understanding of how Walker School operated. They felt more positive about Walker School after their involvement with Hands on Kids and expressed overwhelming confidence in the teachers.

CONCLUSION

The evolution of the Walker School community may be directly attributed to the Hands on Kids project. The staff, united in a purpose, have

developed into a working body able to accomplish successful programming for the volunteers. The volunteers, eager to be involved and gain a sense of accomplishment and self-worth, have worked with teachers toward a common goal. The result has been progress toward offering the best possible education for our children. The children have responded with enthusiasm, an improved sense of self-worth, a feeling of belonging, motivation to learn, and increased achievement.

3

Staff Development from the Principal's Perspective

Dixie Hibner

From the principal's perspective, staff development is what moves the ship ahead. Sometimes the ship may be in a calm sea with no wind; sometimes it may be in a hurricane. In either extreme, and in all kinds of seas in between, staff development programs can help keep the ship moving on the right course. On a ship the captain and the crew must work together. In like manner, in a school the principal and the staff must work together. All must know the course and be steering in the same direction. Each must do his or her job or disasters can occur.

Good staff development programs help the staff and the principal set goals and identify objectives. They help identify problems and determine the solutions that are most likely to improve the situation. To say *staff* is more accurate than to say *teachers* because everyone who works in the school contributes to its success or its failure. Secretaries, playground supervisors, cafeteria personnel, custodians, and aides are vital elements in making schools good places for students to learn. This in no way minimizes the importance of the certified teachers; it merely recognizes that a school cannot operate effectively with only the professional staff. Therefore, whenever feasible, noncertified staff should be included in staff development activities.

Sometimes it is also important to include parents and students. Although this may not always be desirable or realistic, it should be considered. The Jensen Elementary School staff chose to include both parents and students in its most recent staff development project and found the inclusion of them to be extremely successful.

BACKGROUND

Prior to the initiation of the staff development project with Eastern Michigan University (EMU), the staff of Jensen School had found that

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communication was poor and trust levels were low. These conditions existed both horizontally and vertically and flowed in both directions. There was a lack of openness and sharing, and defensiveness was evident. Although staff members were conscientious and children were learning, the working and learning climate needed attention and improvement.

Three separate projects were undertaken by the staff over a three-year period. The progression of needs identified illustrated growth and change, especially when viewed along with additional projects that took place during the same period.

THE FIRST PROJECT

The first of the projects was to improve staff relations both horizontally and vertically. A variety of activities were planned and implemented, including a staff newsletter, notepads with a building logo, sharing bus duty with the principal, and grade-level lunches with the principal. Teachers also taught in one another's classrooms for brief periods to learn more about one another and different grade levels and teaching styles. Probably the key elements in this project were the group-interaction sessions and the development of a building leadership team.

A series of sessions was held after school to help the staff get to know one another better. Facilitated by two EMU professors, the sessions were attended voluntarily by the nonprofessional and the professional staff and the principal. These sessions were considered by many to be high risk, because feelings and attitudes that were not generally discussed were addressed. As a result, staff members began to see one another as more genuine and began to understand one another better.

Our building leadership team was composed of noncertified staff, certified staff, a parent, and the principal. Perhaps one key to its success was that it was not chaired by the principal. All members took turns chairing and acting as recorder. The purpose of the team was to supervise the implementation of the staff development project. The structure of the project required school-wide commitment; without it failure would occur. And there was widespread commitment because the staff knew it was their project and not something controlled by someone else, either the principal or the university facilitator.

THE SECOND PROJECT

The second project was an extension of the first. At the end of the first year, much progress had been made, but changes require long periods of time. Changes in attitudes, trust, and relationships do not come quickly. Therefore, the staff elected to continue the strategies developed in the first-

year project. Encouraged by their achievements, they decided to expand participation to include the students, and to focus on affective education in addition to staff relations.

"Mini-clubs" or student-interest groups were introduced as one of the strategies to accomplish affective goals. Teachers also attended conferences and workshops related to affective education. They organized a "Bring and Brag Bash" to share the ideas and the materials they had used in affective education.

This second-year project went very well, and staff relations continued to improve. As comfort zones expanded, the working and learning climate continued to improve. Trust levels increased and more positive attitudes were observed. Substantial growth was demonstrated over the two-year period.

THE THIRD PROJECT

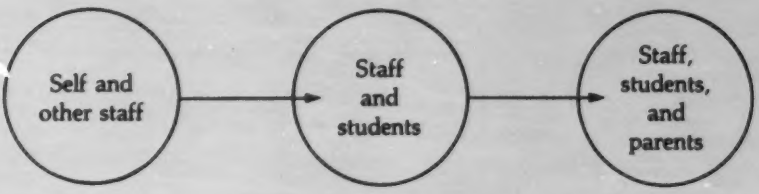
When it was time to identify a need for a staff development project in the third year, the feeling was that staff relations had improved sufficiently to be sustained without continuing as a central focus. Consequently a new priority was set: parents and students.

We decided to initiate a student leadership team consisting of a member elected by each classroom. To increase student involvement and motivation, the children were asked to identify reasons why it was important for them to come to school. The student leadership team compiled the results and identified priorities for dissemination back to the classrooms. The next step was to use those priorities to get children involved in and committed to their own learning.

A workshop for parents, Adventurous Paths to Parenting, was held. Parents could choose to attend two of four sessions. Five parents worked on the building leadership team to help plan the workshop. Well attended, it provided parents with useful information and provided staff with words of appreciation from parents. Reactions were so positive that the parent-teacher organization planned to continue the workshop for parents in the 1982-83 school year.

FROM SELF TO OTHERS

The progression of focal points from the first to the third project is instructive to note. The first project focused on staff members' self-improvement as the first step in improving communications and relationships. The second project continued with this goal and expanded to include another group, students. In the third year the project was extended to incorporate parents.



This progression demonstrated a transition in each successive phase to broader concerns. Beginning with self and extending outward to others may provide a formula for other staff development programs. The self is the basis for any improvement that occurs. One person cannot improve another; one can only facilitate another's growth. As we become more confident and more self-accepting, we become better able to help others. With this progressive formula, starting with self and extending to others, whatever needs are identified and whatever strategies are selected, will build on a sound base and provide for greater individual growth and school improvement.

THE PRINCIPAL'S EXPECTATIONS AND INVOLVEMENT

What does the principal expect from a program of staff development? At Jensen I expected many results. I expected that ultimately improvements would occur in instructional strategies. The improvements could be either a direct or an indirect result of the staff development activities. I felt that if the staff could eliminate some of the things interfering with their effectiveness, they would become even more effective teachers. The elimination of interference was the focus of the first-year Jensen School project.

I wanted the school to be a pleasant place for staff and students, as well as an outstanding center for learning. Every program of staff development must contribute in some way to one or both of these goals. They are not mutually exclusive. They may, in fact, be mutually inclusive. An unpleasant climate is not conducive to learning; a school in which little learning takes place is not a pleasant place to work.

More specifically, I expected higher levels of motivation and involvement by staff members. These two factors are considered critical to growth and improvement. They are the result of high levels of self-esteem and the feeling of having the power to make changes in the environment. Thus, several critical factors are tied together under an umbrella of staff development. It is simplistic to assume that the impact of a program is limited to the area of the specific program goal. There are multiple related factors. Greater staff initiative and higher levels of morale are also expected results.

These factors, in combination with motivation and involvement, lead to

a better work place and greater learning. They may also lead to more active participation by parents and other community members.

Staff development is not a process that occurs rapidly. If it is expected to cause real change, it will not be a one-shot program presented to the staff by an "expert" who leaves town immediately afterward. A good program will be well defined and will have the support and the involvement of the staff and the principal. It will occur over a span of time great enough for changes to take place, whether these changes be curricular or personal in nature. Real and long-lasting changes cannot be hurried or dictated. They must be allowed to evolve, and they must be rehearsed by the persons involved.

A key to the success of any building-level program of staff development is the support of the principal. A review of the literature on staff development quickly tells me that without the principal's support a program is doomed to failure. If principals want changes and improvements to occur, we will have to get involved and actively support the staff in making those changes.

RESULTS

How do you know that a program was successful? How do you know that real changes occurred? These are important questions to principals. We have to be able to justify the expenditure of time, energy, and dollars.

There are the obvious measures of success. For example, were the objectives achieved—was the curriculum written, did the staff learn new discipline techniques, or did class exchanges take place? However, the more important question is, Did the improvements extend beyond the objectives of the project? Did improvement become self-initiated?

To answer this question at Jensen School, we looked for examples of the staff working together effectively to achieve commonly desirable goals that were not included in the objectives and the strategies of the program of staff development. There were several examples of staff-initiated improvements. First, the staff worked cooperatively to raise money for redecorating the staff lounge. They then hung wallpaper and painted, and one staff member made drapes. This was done entirely on staff initiative. They saw that change could occur with some cooperation on their part and some help and support from the principal.

Other examples included the writing of a school discipline code and the participation of numerous teachers on district-level curriculum committees. Staff members contributed extensive time and energy to projects which they had previously not been interested in or willing to do. These projects were above and beyond the commitments the staff had made as a

part of the staff development project. They represented changes within individuals and were indicators of higher levels of motivation and commitment. The staff became willing to take action rather than complain that nothing was being done.

CONCLUSIONS

Although staff development can be a time-consuming activity for the principal, its rewards are more than worth the effort. If a principal is going to do his or her job well, staff development is a requirement. This means development and growth for the principal as well as the staff.

Three critical factors for an effective program are the support of the principal, the involvement of the staff, and time for change to occur. Another helpful ingredient for the Jensen School project was the participation of an objective outsider or facilitator. This model used by Eastern Michigan University is especially useful in situations that begin with low levels of trust between participating parties. The facilitator was not partial to any side and was particularly helpful in working through the early phases of the program.

If a principal expects high levels of performance from the staff and the students, means must be provided to allow for growth and involvement. The principal must be an integral part of the process, working along with the staff and offering support. Good staff development programs are a way to provide for growth and improvement.

4

Stepping-Stones to Success

Barbara A. Skone

"I can't believe how much work my staff members are accomplishing beyond what they need to do!" These are the words of a principal whose staff were involved in the Eastern Michigan University (EMU) Staff Development for School Improvement program for the first time.

This administrator's reaction relays a loud and clear message to educators: When building staff members are given the opportunity to commit themselves to solve a problem and are given the freedom to implement a plan, a tremendous amount of energy and enthusiasm results. Participating teachers become committed to a common goal. They work together as a team and have a sense of belonging that results in a positive feeling toward self, other staff members, the students, and the building as a total organization.

Does this sound too good to be true? Experience assures us that when EMU's six-step staff development program is followed as written, dramatic change and growth can take place in a building staff within as few as six months.

One underlying concept is foremost: The program must be voluntary. It must involve shared decision making, not coercion or a mandate. If staff are required to participate in a program without sharing in decisions regarding the program, there will be steady resistance to the work to be accomplished, as well as the strong possibility of project failure. This concept of shared decision making must be in the forefront from the first step in the staff development program—awareness—to the final commitment by the building staff.

IMPORTANT PRELIMINARY STEPS

To facilitate the success of the program, the following awareness steps should be considered prior to the implementation of the six-step process.

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Gaining support for the program. As with any organizational development plan, it is extremely important to gain support for the program from the organization's ranking decision makers such as the superintendent's cabinet, the teacher union, and the staff development advisory council (if one exists). Staff are more willing to commit themselves to a program that has the approval of the people they hold in high esteem.

Selecting a candidate school. Upon acceptance of the program by these influential people, it is time to select carefully a candidate building for program involvement. The following questions should be considered when selecting a school:

1. Will the principal be supportive of the project and yet not need to be the decision maker?
2. Will the principal be supportive of a project the teachers identify even though it may not be on a topic of his or her choice?
3. Do the staff in the building have seniority so that there will be few reassignments while the project is being developed and implemented?
4. Are the staff/school being chosen with a predetermined administrative goal in mind such as the raising of student achievement scores? (If so, there is an excellent chance of a poor project outcome.)

Approaching the principal. After a school has been selected, it is advisable that the principal be approached by the district coordinator for staff development and be given an overview of the six-step process. A written explanation of the program is beneficial for the principal to study. The district coordinator, the university facilitator, and the principal should then meet to answer in detail the principal's questions. Principals must realize that they will not decide whether their staff will participate in the project and they will not determine the topic of the project. Some administrators may find it difficult to accept those conditions. However, their acceptance is essential to the project.

Letting the idea spread. If the principal agrees to support the project, the time has come to think about the relationship between building personnel and the unwritten power structure of the school organization. I suggest that the principal personally talk to one or two staff leaders about the project to let them know that they are free to discuss the project concept with other staff members. Allow a day or more for the idea to spread before a total staff meeting is held. This building of awareness, readiness, and commitment is the beginning of the six-step process.

STEP 1—AWARENESS, READINESS, COMMITMENT

Step 1 is the most critical of the six steps. This initial total staff meeting is conducted by the university facilitator and/or the district coordinator. The presenters should be prepared to answer such questions as these from the teachers:

1. Why us? Why was this building selected? What did we do wrong?
2. What is the catch? We never get something for nothing.
3. How do we know we will actually make the final decision on the topic for staff development?
4. Can we be sure that the administrator will not tell us what to do or how to do it, or change what we plan to do?
5. Will we spend hours or days writing the proposal with long lists of goals and objectives and then have no time for implementation?
6. How can we agree to do a project when we don't know what the topic will be?
7. Does everyone on the staff have to be involved?
8. When do we do all this work?
9. What new resources outside the district are available to us?

These questions are best answered at the initial meeting, but if some of the staff members are uneasy about making a decision to participate at this point, schedule another meeting at their convenience. Perhaps in the interim the district coordinator can be available to conduct a question-and-answer session with those who still have questions. Establishing a level of trust with the staff and assuring them that there is no catch to the process is extremely important. The staff need to understand how involvement in this project might benefit individuals as well as the whole building.

It is important to remember that the required 75-percent vote to participate should represent truly interested "yes" votes, not coerced or compromised "yes" votes. Staff members must feel safe in casting their vote (a secret ballot will ensure this) and not fear future negative peer relationships or pressure from the administrator.

When three-quarters of a faculty vote in favor of participation in the project, there are good prospects for a successful growth experience for the entire building population, including the staff, the principal, and the students.

A word of caution: The principal, the university facilitator, and the district coordinator must understand that if a 75-percent majority vote does not materialize, they should thank teachers and stop advocating a

project. The university facilitator and the district coordinator should then pick themselves up, brush themselves off, and find another interested principal and staff. This is not the time to become angry or bitter or feel personal fault for the "no" vote. Perhaps when the time is right, the "no" staff will become a "yes" staff.

The EMU staff development program is based on principles of adult learning, and because of this foundation, it is a winner.

5

Benefits of Staff Development Projects for Downsized Schools

Gerald L. Jennings

From World War II until recently much of the vitality of schools resulted from three conditions: the steady growth of enrollments, the increased support for new programs created by that growth, and the continuous influx of new teachers. The passing of the baby boom has resulted in the closing of many schools and the laying off of countless hundreds of young teachers, especially in large urban areas. The recession-plagued national economy has further complicated the problems created by declining enrollments and has placed terrible strains on the financial resources of many school districts.

In addition to the "downsizing" of school districts as a result of fewer students, there has often been a reduction in support for curriculum planning and staff development, as well as in the number of administrative and resource personnel who normally help coordinate programs. Also, teachers have found very little help available to them when they have relocated to teaching positions for which they have limited preparation. It is not unusual to find a loss of team spirit and group identity among teachers because of changes that have occurred in staff assignments.

School climate frequently takes a serious turn for the worse under conditions such as these. Instructional programs become badly disjointed, teachers operate in closed cliques and draw into themselves, and a great sense of distrust often develops toward the administration. At the very least these conditions tend to result in a breakdown in communications and a deterioration in working relationships among teachers, between teachers and administrators, and between the community and the schools.

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Realizing the potential for such problems, many districts seek ways to counter the negative conditions with positive action. Of course, nothing can be done to halt the reduction in the number of students enrolled in the schools. Downsizing may become a way of life in many districts. What districts can do, though, is devise more strategies of working with staff to use the expertise of mature teachers who remain in the schools. Teachers themselves may provide solutions to the problems that develop in schools because of downsizing.

One approach that has offered promise is the Eastern Michigan University (EMU) school-based staff development program. In contrast to programs that draw faculty from several schools for staff development, the EMU school-based program focuses on a single school and its faculty. The program emphasizes the value of faculty identifying school problems and selecting strategies to solve those problems. It puts teachers in the position of working with their peers and providing leadership for school staff development projects.

The approach has been used in a number of school districts in Greater Detroit. One that faced the conditions mentioned earlier and recognized the potential of the EMU school-based staff development program, was Garden City.

THE GARDEN CITY EXAMPLE

Garden City is a community of nearly 50,000 population, located 10 miles west of Detroit among a group of suburban cities. It typifies many middle class cities of the region that are dependent on the automotive industry. In recent years it lost 55 percent of its student population and closed eight schools—four elementary, three junior high, and one senior high. Virtually all teachers with less than 14 years tenure in the district (except very specialized teachers) were victims of a reduction in force (RIF). Numerous staff changes occurred as faculty were shifted from building to building to fill positions vacated by RIFFed teachers. Budget cuts also resulted in the loss of funds for staff development, curriculum updating, and numerous projects that might have helped teachers deal with changes in teaching assignments and new jobs in the districts.

For several years the Garden City Public Schools had had a program to help teachers deal with some of the problems that grew out of reassignment to new grade levels or subject areas. However, very little had been done to help a whole school faculty work out numerous building problems such as curriculum updating or program articulation. The district curriculum coordinator recognized the need for a program to assist with such problems. When the EMU staff development program was made known to him, he requested consideration as a possible project site.

Farmington Elementary School was identified in 1981 as a candidate for a project, and the district coordinator for staff development (who also served as English department head and reading specialist in the high school) approached the Farmington principal. A faculty meeting was arranged in early November to introduce teachers to the EMU staff development program. At the conclusion of the meeting, the faculty decided to become involved as a way of dealing with some of the school's needs, which included reassignments, retraining, and morale. Two of the faculty volunteered to serve on a steering committee responsible for developing a project plan and guiding project activities.

In early December a second faculty meeting was scheduled to conduct a needs assessment. In small-group discussions the district coordinator asked the faculty to develop lists of needs. Groups' lists were compiled, displayed on a chalkboard, and analyzed for prominent themes and recurring statements. The analysis resulted in the selection of eight objectives and a central theme or priority—improving communication in the school. Four additional faculty were selected for the steering committee to provide broader representation and to include personnel from special areas of the school program. A plan for staff development was drafted by the steering committee during two half-day work sessions in February. Approval of the project by the total faculty in early March during a lunch-hour review led to a final draft of the proposal.

In addition, the district Staff/Curriculum Development Council and the Parent Curriculum Advisory Committee were asked to approve the project. Their approval came with only minor changes proposed. The board of education was then presented with the plan at a special meeting conducted at the Farmington School. Board members expressed great interest in and enthusiasm for the project.

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

Let us look at some things that occurred as the plan was being developed. Teachers identified the priority for the project from their interest in a number of problems that they perceived to exist in the school. They determined that communications played a significant role in problems of curriculum improvement, instructional methods, and school operations. By focusing on the improvement of communications among teachers, between teachers and the principal, and among the school, the children, and the community, they believed it might be possible to remedy some problems.

The result of their analysis became a set of objectives. To establish teacher ownership of the project, teachers were asked to suggest strategies

to be used to achieve the objectives. The team writing the plan assembled teacher input into a list of strategies under each objective. They also identified the teachers responsible for each strategy and the anticipated costs to implement each project activity.

The writing team became the real key in the development and the implementation of the project. It served as a steering committee for weekly decision making and monitoring of project activities. The committee included a cross-section of teachers from different grades at Farmington. All were volunteers for the committee. Through this committee the project gained credibility as a teacher-defined and teacher-directed attempt to improve the school environment. The project provided an opportunity to develop teacher-leaders and to build an effective leadership team within a school building. During this period of great change in schools, such efforts to create a workable and constructive school-leadership structure seem to be very much needed.

The school principal and the district staff development coordinator also assumed key leadership roles in the Farmington project. Both displayed positive and supportive attitudes and offered encouragement to the steering committee throughout the project. Neither attempted to impose direction on project plans and activities. In fact, the principal found himself offering teachers more opportunities to make decisions than in the past. Decision making became more of a shared process than a unilateral act of the principal. His presence at steering committee meetings provided encouragement and information for decision making.

The district coordinator assumed a similar posture but provided more direct guidance for project development. She met with the steering committee in brown-bag sessions almost weekly throughout the year. Her guidance during initial planning meetings and her experience in getting a school faculty started on project development were of particular value. She was able to be involved in varying degrees as the steering committee sensed her availability or willingness to offer assistance. However, she made no attempt to dominate; Farmington teachers planned and directed virtually all project activities.

IMPORTANT PROJECT STRATEGIES

A number of strategies in the project seemed particularly important. One was developing more articulation across and within grade levels. Discussion and work were planned to encourage this kind of communication. Teachers looked at curriculum in each of the subject areas to be sure that they were teaching similar content and skills within a grade level, and to coordinate what they were teaching with what was being done at other grade levels. They found, initially, that they were not teaching the

same content and were not focusing on the same concepts in their instruction. The project encouraged the opening of lines of communication and provided a forum for discussion of teaching techniques.

An example of this process was the science curriculum. The steering committee made it possible to provide each teacher with a science kit of laboratory materials and equipment that had been in storage. No one had had access to the materials and equipment because they had been boxed up and not arranged for easy handling. The committee, with the assistance of other teachers, sorted the equipment and related reference materials into kits and distributed them to all teachers. It became possible to have a fully articulated science program throughout the school because of this effort.

Another project strategy involved support for a much heavier emphasis on the coordination of reading activities in all grades. The reading specialist was given more support and attention by teachers, particularly from February through June. An immediate and satisfying result of this activity was that children responded very well to the attention given to reading. For example, the number of books checked out and used from the reading center increased dramatically during this five-month period.

In still another activity, discussion of the Michigan Education Assessment Program test results for fourth grade revealed a need to review instruction in mathematics. Teachers discovered that a number of mathematics concepts on the test were not included in classroom instruction. Revisions were planned to correct the problem in 1982–83.

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

Under the eight objectives of the project 30 strategies or tasks were identified. They were as limited as scheduling regular grade-level meetings and preparing a "perpetual calendar" for the school office, as extensive as reorganizing and developing science instruction and improving reading. With such a large number and variety of tasks to monitor, project evaluation became a concern. As the EMU facilitator and an ex officio member of the steering committee, I suggested that specific criteria be developed for each task. Each criterion was to have an observable or measurable element so that there would be a clear indication of what had been accomplished. The steering committee was then able to develop a list of 64 criteria for project evaluation.

During a project-evaluation session at the end of the school year, the steering committee determined that at least 52 of the criteria had been completely satisfied and another nine had been partially satisfied; only three criteria had not been met. The committee felt this was an excellent performance. The committee also identified a number of unexpected outcomes as extensions of project influence.

One of those unexpected outcomes was improved attitudes of teachers toward peers. One teacher commented that she now trusted another teacher whom she had been suspicious of earlier. The opportunity openly to discuss concerns had changed working relationships.

Another example of the positive effects of the project was a teacher's response to the development of the science program. When she arrived at a session to find out what was to be done about the program, she asked the group leader (another teacher), in a resigned manner, "What are you going to tell me about science?" The response was, "We aren't going to tell you anything. We are all going to work out a program together, as a team." At that point her entire attitude toward the task changed. She became a strong contributor to the effort.

CONCLUSION

In the above activities as well as in many others, there was evidence of how a school-based staff development project worked to help improve school climate. The loss of basic administrative and curriculum-support services that results from the downsizing of schools and reductions in budget can sometimes be managed in positive ways. The experience of mature teachers who remain in a district can be drawn on to restore school spirit and program direction. By working together to identify solutions to problems and by supporting one another, teachers can remedy many conditions themselves. The project at Farmington Elementary School offers an illustration. Additional work and follow-up will need to take place on activities planned during the project. However, the tone and the pace have been set with activities already complete so that teachers are encouraged to continue on their own.

6

Boosting Morale and Improving Communications

Alethea Helbig

The Whitmore Lake experience with staff development provides ample evidence that when teachers work together they can make positive things happen. The principal of Spencer Elementary School in that system remarked that his teachers' project through the Eastern Michigan University (EMU) Staff Development for School Improvement (SDSI) program completely changed the atmosphere of the school.

"The teachers' concerted efforts to raise morale within the school and to improve communications between school and community have had very positive results," he noted.

> Where staff tended to isolate themselves from administrators and other staff and suppress problems rather than air them and share them, now they bring them out in the open. They have learned to talk with one another about their successes and discuss common concerns. Through the "teacher-owned" staff development program, the teachers in Spencer have learned they can influence their own destiny. That is what is making them more open with one another and has given them a whole new outlook toward each other and their work. That's where the difference comes.

The change the principal referred to did not take place instantaneously, and it grew out of some very troubling circumstances. The Whitmore Lake Public Schools are in a small, mostly residential community. About 50 teachers staff the one high school and the one elementary school, which serve some 850 students. In recent years several millage failures resulted in significant staff reductions and substantial cutbacks in such areas as athletics, music, art, languages, and programs for the gifted and the talented. Because the millage proposals kept going down, the teachers felt

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unsupported and unappreciated by the community. They interpreted the failed proposals as an indication that the community lacked confidence in their ability to serve their students. They felt frustrated in their efforts to provide the high quality of education they wanted their students to have. With the prospect of even more layoffs and restrictions on the purchase of materials, they became hostile toward the administration and the board of education as well as toward the community, and they even began to feel ill at ease with one another. They were hurt and disillusioned.

PREPARING A PROPOSAL

The teachers in Whitmore Lake Public Schools had completed two projects under the EMU SDSI program prior to the 1981–82 school year. The teachers at the Spencer Elementary School voted to participate in still another project, and through a needs assessment they overwhelmingly identified staff morale and communication with the community as prime targets. Immediately after completing the needs assessment, the staff formed a writing team of seven teacher-leaders to prepare a proposal. These teachers represented various grade levels and special education. The writing team met over two full days to develop strategies designed to meet the needs voiced by the staff. They brainstormed among themselves, solicited ideas from the rest of the staff, considered suggestions made in the evaluation of the previous year's work, and reviewed comments made during the needs assessment. They wrote and rewrote their proposal, determined to be specific and to identify the best methods of implementing their strategies and providing necessary follow-through and thorough evaluation techniques. They were really riding high, in a manner of speaking, and their hard work paid off.

Testifying to how valuable their thorough preparation was to the ultimate success of the proposal, one member of the team said, "The underlying issue . . . was communication . . . . I think that supporting communication was there . . . because of the way the proposal was written . . . ."

INITIATING THE PROJECT

After the school staff accepted the writing team's proposal for implementing the project, the team solicited volunteers to serve on the different committees that were established by the proposal. All but three members of the faculty signed up for at least one committee. The district coordinator, the building representative, and one other teacher chaired the three main committees charged with implementing the strategies. The teachers were so eager to begin their work, so aware of the importance of getting off to a good start, and so conscious of the time constraints placed

on them, that they began meeting in committees and subcommittees even before EMU had accepted their proposal. They continued to meet often, as needed, for the duration of the project. Some formal meetings were held before and after school, but most committee work took place as teachers passed in the halls or gathered informally in classrooms, and usually involved a couple of people who were charged with specific tasks. Informal and frequent communication became the game plan as the project progressed. Periodically the district facilitator published updates, memos apprising staffers of the progress on each objective, strategy by strategy. The tone of these informal communications was consistently upbeat, and the effect was to keep spirits up as well as to inform people how things were coming along. It is significant that, busy as the teachers were, involved as they became, no one dropped out of the project. Although no one who had opted out at the beginning elected to join, no one "defected" for any reason either. Enthusiasm and commitment remained high.

The methods the teachers adopted to implement the strategies were varied and appear to have been quite effective in achieving the desired goals. In the effort to promote a more positive school image, the teachers created a slogan for the school, "Reach for the Future," the first word of which provided the acronym for still another motto, "Rational Education Appreciates Community Help." They conducted a contest among the children for a school logo, and they combined the slogans and logo for interest-catching bumper stickers, buttons, and a signboard for the school grounds. They brought in an expert to conduct a workshop on alleviating stress and counteracting burnout and prepared a presentation for the school board in which they explained the intent of the project and shared the slogans, the logo, the newsletters, the bumper stickers, and the buttons. They contacted communications media in the area and were pleased by a particularly sympathetic and laudatory write-up in the *Ann Arbor News*.

THE THREE MOST POPULAR ACTIVITIES

Of the many activities the teachers sponsored, three generated the most excitement. The teachers engaged a very lively and inspiring speaker for an inservice workshop on effective classroom management. He offered concrete suggestions for reducing wear and tear on teachers. "This is what I myself have done to keep the kids from bugging me for directions, for example . . ." was the kind of information he shared with the group. He explained the materials that he had brought with him and the philosophy behind them, and then teachers had an hour to go through the many items in his several boxes and kits, select those that would be the most useful,

and photocopy them. After the workshop the teachers made a conscious effort to share what they had copied. They reported what materials they had photocopied to the district coordinator, who summarized the information and circulated it among the staff. Teachers could then borrow from their colleagues the materials they had missed or had not had time to photocopy.

Two newsletters that were mailed to homes throughout the community also aroused a tremendous amount of attention. The masthead proudly featured the logo and slogans. In a spirit of optimism that belied the teachers' previous pessimism and implied a deep belief that somehow funds to publish future issues would inevitably be found, the masthead boldly carried the labels, "Issue 1" and "Issue 2." Newsworthy items ranged from "Computers Come to Whitmore Lake School" to "Who's Paying for This Newsletter?" (a sneaky and catchy way of informing the community about the EMU program and blowing teachers' horns to boot) to "Young Authors' Week." Other pieces reported on classroom happenings, parent-teacher organization (PTO) activities, student council projects and plans, the new superintendent, and staff news, for a wide variety of interesting and informative offerings. The first issue concluded with a calendar of events for May and June. Where there were spaces with no events to highlight, pictures of children filled in, a very effective way of making sure that the parents paid attention to the newsletter.

"The children brought the newsletters home and put them on the wall, with their pictures there, too! They liked seeing themselves, and the parents were proud," a teacher reported, obviously satisfied with this part of a job very well done.

The last of the three most popular activities involved the allocation of $50 stipends to individual teachers. A committee of teachers monitored requests for stipends. Teachers could use their stipend for activities or materials that would help them feel better about teaching and their school. To some teachers, going to a professional conference on some topic of special interest to them seemed very important. Whitmore Lake is a small school district, and many of the teachers have no one, or at most maybe only one other teacher, with whom they can discuss their particular concerns or interests. A stipend facilitated their attendance at a conference by paying registration fees and helping with travel expenses. The teachers were required to present rationales for their request and to turn in reports afterward stating what they had done and what they had gained from their stipend. They had to explain how the stipend raised their morale or helped them function more effectively in the classroom or altered their attitudes or behavior—in short, how the activity had helped them to be better teachers and had made them feel better about teaching.

OUTCOMES FOR TEACHERS

There is abundant evidence that the attitudes of teachers, students, and administrators have become more positive and that a new spirit of cooperation prevails in the school and between school and community. The ad hoc committees organized to implement the various strategies made determined efforts to reach out to administrators and members of the community. At a meeting of the newsletter committee, for example, I observed four teachers enthusiastically choosing which articles should go into which issue of the newsletter. They were delighted that copy had been submitted not only by so many of their fellow teachers, but, among others, by PTO members (some of whom had also contributed photographs), the president of the high school student council, and the principal of Spencer School. They unanimously agreed that having too many articles was a good kind of problem to cope with! They also agreed that somehow in some issue they would find the space to print everyone's submission, and they did. They turned to the PTO for help in erecting a permanent sign in front of the school on which to display the logo and the slogans, and for assistance in continuing their efforts to create more positive attitudes toward the school after the EMU grant ran out. They also turned to the school board, particularly for assistance in underwriting the cost of future newsletters. Whether financial support materializes remains to be seen, but the teachers met with expressions of approval and optimistic responses from the public.

Before the inservice workshop on more effective classroom management, as a way of alleviating stress the planning committee organized a dinner to which everyone contributed a dish. The fellowship hour enabled the teachers to share their personal as well as their professional lives with one another. Another activity of a social and professional nature for which enthusiasm ran very high was a Catalog Party, a before-school breakfast gathering at which teachers shared new curriculum materials, successful methods, news about conferences they had attended or planned to attend, journals they felt were valuable, and the like.

A teacher whose responsibility had been the now-eliminated program for the gifted and the talented had grown discouraged over no longer being able to work with her former students and rather lackadaisical about the program itself. With a stipend of $50 from the staff development fund, she attended a conference that so revitalized her that she resolved to work once again to reinstate the program at Spencer School. She stated her intention in her written report to the stipend committee:

> Since the loss of funding for our gifted program, I have found myself becoming very complacent about the needs of our gifted and talented students. I

> sometimes feel guilty about letting the program die without a fight—but not guilty enough to do anything about it . . . . The conference [I attended] was every bit as educational and inspirational as I hoped it would be. I attended small- and large-group sessions with some of the most gifted people in the state and nation. It was also good to renew acquaintances with other educators of the gifted from around the state. I think it was one of the most productive and useful conferences I have ever attended . . . . I also learned valuable information and made important contacts that will be useful for me in my graduate research.

Another teacher reported to the committee how revitalized he felt at having been given $50 to spend on journal subscriptions for the school's professional library:

> Over the past several years I have become less inclined to purchase magazines that would allow me to maintain a current approach to trends and ideas . . . . A professional library . . . serves to enhance the quality of instruction provided by the teacher to his or her students. Monies made available in the staff development program of EMU for Whitmore Lake have enabled my old enthusiasm to surface, and I anticipate a great year for 1982–1983.

One teacher purchased an egg timer with her one remaining stipend dollar. She intended to use the egg timer to implement a classroom management technique which she had learned about at the conference she had attended with her stipend. Someone there had suggested that teachers not answer any questions from students after they give an assignment until the students have worked on the problem for three full minutes—the length of time it takes for the egg timer to empty itself.

These were typical requests and typical reports on what happened to the requests. These ideas and others like them the teachers shared at the Catalog Party and also in written communications circulated among the staff. So the "neat things" that turned teachers on individually benefitted other teachers too.

OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS

Although it is considerably more difficult to determine just how much effect the program had on the behavior and attitudes of the students, the newsletters certainly attracted much attention among those in the elementary school, whereas high school students became involved at the production end. Students duplicated the written plan for the proposal that made the newsletters possible, and printed the newsletters themselves. The logo contest, though a rather abstract undertaking for elementary school children, produced a number of thoughtful and ingenious entries from students. The winning one came from a third grader and a fifth grader,

whose combined efforts could be seen in the striking and very appropriate symbol of a cupped hand sheltering within it a small schoolhouse labeled "W. L.," the whole surrounded by the new school slogan, "Reach for the Future."

"The proposal has helped the children get some idea of how school and community work together," said one teacher. "There were exercises for the kids on writing what "Reach for the Future" meant to them and what's good about the school. One wrote that she liked school a lot but wished her bird could come!" Students looked forward to receiving buttons bearing the logo, and some of them chose to express their new appreciation of their school by conducting a clean-up campaign of the grounds.

Following are student-written comments, some of the many that were posted in the halls of Spencer School for children, teachers, and community to read:

> "I like our school because we have two tire swings, monkey bars, and a lot more stuff on our playground. We have a lot of special teachers, too. I wish my bird went to school because he doesn't know what he's missing."
>
> "I want people to care about this school. I know we do not have much money, but please care about our school. I like school because I like the teachers and the things we do with math, spelling, and reading. So please care about our school."
>
> "I care about our school because the teachers help us learn about all kinds of work. Our school is a good school. Our Moms and Dads care that we learn a lot in school. If we didn't have school, we would not know how to read."
>
> "I like my school because it gives me a good education. Because I can meet people and make friends. It gives me help in learning the things I need to learn. This school has rules that are very, very good. I meet new friends, and I can play with my best friend and my other friends. I think Whitmore Lake School is one of the best schools I have ever gone to."
>
> "[This is a] school the community helps alot, and we appreciate it."
>
> "We should appreciate the school because the teachers are willing to help. If they weren't willing, we wouldn't have any school. The teachers have to try to teach you the things you need to know."

OUTCOMES FOR ADMINISTRATORS

Just as students and teachers began looking at the school and at one another with refreshed eyes, so also administrators acquired both a new image and new perceptions of their schools. The superintendent, whose busy schedule allowed little time for interaction with teachers and students, accepted an invitation to the first inservice workshop, the one on classroom management techniques. Although, as it happened, he did not attend, his acceptance showed that he observed and approved of the

energy and the creativity with which the teachers were tackling their objectives.

A big morale booster with both students and teachers was the principal's invention of the Bookosaurus, a mythical monster that captured the imagination of the school and generally lifted spirits. In a brief communication affixed to the door of the reading laboratory, he wrote, "Concerning the Footprint Invasion of My Office [evidence of students' reading activity]: I suddenly realized that my office walls could end up completely covered with footprints . . . unless I called upon some of my magical principal powers . . . [to conjure up] a monster from history called a Bookosaurus . . ." whose voracious appetite for footprints could only be satisfied if the students continued to read lots of books.

Not only did the principal actively involve himself in curriculum by promoting the reading program; also, he said, he now felt freer about going to the teachers with problems when he saw them, and he was gratified that the teachers appeared less inhibited about bringing their problems to him. He felt less isolated and more a part of what was going on in the school. In fact, the newsletter committee made a point of inviting him to their meetings and searching him out when he didn't arrive on time, and he responded by attending with enthusiasm and contributing significantly.

He testified publicly to the good effect the program had on the school. At a meeting of the principals held on the EMU campus, he described for the group with pleasure and appreciation how his staff had worked together to make the project successful, and he stated that he felt it was important for the success of proposals that they be teacher generated and implemented. He praised his staff, and his obvious pride and satisfaction in their accomplishments lent force and conviction to his statements.

CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS

Successful as the project was in a general way in accomplishing its stated objectives of raising morale and promoting communication, it was not completed without a few temporary setbacks. Several challenges and concerns surfaced along the road. Quite generally the teachers complained that they had trouble finding time to do the work. The school was small and lacked the support staff usually found in larger systems. The teachers had to do their own clerical work, for example, or locate someone else to do it for them. Both avenues were time-consuming. Meeting deadlines was a great problem. But the teachers met the deadlines; they managed, and they felt good afterward about having coped so well.

Then too, the mechanics of the project itself presented some severe stumbling blocks. The teachers felt that the needs assessment should be "more to the point" and that "EMU should realize a simpler plan for

evaluating" the success of projects. Getting the proposal approved at the various stages occasionally proved frustrating. The billboard the staff hoped to rent for displaying the logo and slogans was no longer available by the time the teachers knew the money from EMU would be available to pay for it. This was disillusioning, but the teachers inventively made the most of the situation. They decided to construct a permanent sign for the school grounds instead, even though the location was less advantageous for viewing the sign. They carried their construction problem to, among others, the PTO. Someone from that organization came up with a professional sign-painter who agreed to fashion the sign for the school and contribute the labor involved. In this case invention dealt well with adversity and facilitated some communication besides.

Still other matters of concern involved media coverage, which the teachers felt was inadequate in spite of repeated efforts on their part to arouse the interest of area papers and radio and TV stations. Then too, time ran out before they could establish a long-range support group that satisfied them. They have, however, received expressions of interest in continuing the newsletter from the school board, and they have high hopes that such support will indeed become a reality.

As the university facilitator, I discovered to my dismay that there was simply not enough time to get into the school often and get to know the teachers and their situation as well as I would have liked to. I would have appreciated more opportunities for establishing a better working relationship with the staff, for creating a more rewarding (for me, at least) atmosphere in which we could "roll up our sleeves and get the job done together." I would have enjoyed such a cooperative working relationship much more than the peripheral, sometimes ambivalent, liaison role I found myself playing. And I could have contributed more to the success of the project. On the whole, however, the experience was very exciting and extremely gratifying. How could it have been otherwise, with so much positive change taking place?

THE RESULTS OF THE PROJECT

Measuring the success of a project intended to raise morale and improve communication is difficult. How does one determine whether or not the teaching-learning climate improved? One way is to simply ask the people who were involved whether they felt positive change occurred based on their observations of their own behavior and attitudes and those of the people with whom they worked and came into contact. At the time I wrote this, the results of a questionnaire sent to the community were not yet available. A survey of the teachers indicated that, in spite of some setbacks and practical concerns, their reactions were overwhelmingly positive.

Their responses consisted almost entirely of remarks that proved that they felt good about what the project had accomplished. For example:

> "Made me aware of how many neat things are going on in our district."
>
> "Of course, it is a relief to gather together on an issue we all feel positive about."
>
> "Yes, a little . . . It's nice to hear about refreshing new ideas and positive things."
>
> ". . . it helps me smile more!"
>
> "I'm very involved in making my students proud of our district."
>
> "The newsletter has lots of good positive information."
>
> "Very dedicated and supportive members on our staff. We will come out with something that truly benefits the community."
>
> "Most worthwhile proposal so far."

When comments like these about a program are typical, that program can only be described as successful in the opinion of the respondents.

I asked the district coordinator and the building representative what they felt teachers had learned about the process of change through the EMU staff development program.

"We've learned a lot from our projects," the coordinator replied, "—what not to do, how to do things more easily, how to save time doing things. This and previous projects have worked out well and had positive results, and people are therefore more willing to commit themselves and make the time for the long run."

The coordinator felt that the 1982 project could serve as a model project for other schools, because on the whole it proceeded so smoothly. Obviously success breeds pride and confidence.

I asked the same two teachers whether or not they could detect any effect on the students in terms of school improvement. They were quick to respond in the affirmative.

"It's hard to get excited about what you're teaching with the pressures of the economy, millage defeats, and so forth," said the building representative.

> But when you start to feel good, and things are happening, and you're being supported by people other than your peers, that's when you say you can stay in there and plug away because other people value what you do. The children see the teachers together, and the kids understand it's ultimately for them.

I inquired how much of this change, in their opinion, would have happened without the project.

"None of it" was the quick and emphatic response.

"The project was essential," stated the coordinator. "I really hope that something like this will happen in the fall."

Interestingly, a very eloquent witness to the success of the project was a teacher who, for philosophical reasons, chose not to become involved in the project. I asked her the same questions I had posed to the members of the coordinating committee: "Do you feel the project has had any positive effect on the teachers?"

"Yes, I do," she replied without hesitation.

> I think they feel a lot better about the whole situation because it's putting them back in touch with the community. They are feeling like they are able to give the community some information about what's going on in school, positive information rather than negative, which it's been a lot of the time in the past two years. They need to know that the community is in touch with what they are doing on the good side of things, and that they do care about their kids.

"Do you think they've had fun doing these things?" I asked.

> Yes! You can hear them in the lounge all the time, and they're very involved in it. They had a very good time coming up with the logo, and they've been really enthusiastic about getting the parents and buttons, bumper stickers, signs, etc., together so that the community can see what they've come up with. All the kids have buttons and have made some interesting comments about what that hand and school meant, and how it stood for the school and community. When I explained it to the kids in my classroom, they were really funny because they knew that that hand was a helping hand and the parents are taxpayers and they help the school.

"That might have some really long-range effects sometime when they grow up, don't you think?" I went on. "So you really feel the teachers have done a lot of interacting? Have they done more talking together about this than they ordinarily do about projects?"

"Yes," she answered, "because they had to get something out into the community. It was important that they got it done, and they wanted it done at a certain time. They didn't let it drag out. They did a lot more interacting."

"Has it had any carryover to curriculum or any other problem?" I asked.

Her reply was guardedly optimistic: "I think so, yes. I think it will register about the time the millage comes up. We'll see if the community is feeling better about what the teachers are doing."

SOME OBSERVATIONS BY THE PRINCIPAL

When I interviewed the principal at project's end, I discovered that his reactions were almost identical to those of the teachers. So there appeared

to be unanimity at Spencer School that the project was good for the school. The principal made a few additional observations that were of value in casting perspective on the teachers' efforts and the success of the project.

Q. Do you feel the teachers were successful in their project this year? I'm interested in your perceptions about what happened to the goals.

A. The teachers themselves set the goals for their project. What often tends to happen is that they become too ambitious and set goals that are a little too high. They went into this project with the intention of setting realistic goals. I believe that in this year's project they will have achieved all of the ends they've set for themselves. The newsletter has been a success. They had problems with the time lines, but it's going through. The logo contest and the buttons are finished, and the sign going up in front of the school for the community to see is in the final stages now and will be completed before the end of the year. The individual stipends for classroom teachers to get things that would help promote better feelings has gone well. A majority of the teachers have taken advantage of it. On the whole, I think goals have been very realistic for them this year.

Q. Do you think the goals have been accomplished in the sense of lifting morale?

A. Yes, I think it's one step in keeping their spirits up. They went through a long contract negotiation this year and are still faced with the possibility of staff cuts having just come off staff cuts. They needed something to focus on that would take interest away from these other problems and put a little spirit back into things. It did help tremendously. It's not the focal point of their lives here, but it is definitely something that helped them get through another day, look forward to the day after tomorrow, and get them talking with each other and planning. It keeps them occupied and doing something that they feel will give support for them as well as showing that they support the community.

Q. Has doing these things helped them communicate better with you? Have you had an opportunity to communicate better with them? How do you feel the project has helped you?

A. It has helped me . . . I'm just one of the people involved in staff development, not the administrator involved in staff development. I'm just one of the crew. I'm on a couple of committees. The group that worked on the goals consulted me, but I did not have any influence on what they were doing as far as what they could or couldn't do. I became a part of the whole organization. Communication between the teachers and me has really improved because of this program. Some things are going to take longer to occur, and we really can't measure them now, such as the community's reaction to this project. It takes some time for the community to realize what's going on. Newsletters going to the homes have to be read and commented on, responses made back to the school. When they discover the staff is behind it all, I think it will help the community.

Q. Have you had any feedback from the school board? Any attitudes, influence coming from them that might have longer-range ramifications?

A. They do know about it. They've made a number of comments—positive—at board meetings and privately too. As far as having a long-range or immediate effect of any kind, I've not been able to measure it in any way only because I think our board is involved in a very awkward and serious time with budget problems. It's just these kinds of things we're talking about—the staff morale—something that's kind of put on the back burner for a moment.

Q. Could you share any of the positive comments that the board members made?

A. Specifically they made comments about the newsletter after the first one went out. That was received very warmly. They were very impressed with it. Also, the logo and buttons were distributed—the board thought that was a good idea, and a number of individuals commented on it at the board meeting. They urged that practices like this and attitudes like this continue.

Q. Do you think that they might be supportive with money, for the newsletter particularly?

A. Yes, they might be if our financial situation changes. But I'm afraid that right now there are other things that are more pressing.

Q. Any problems you saw with the project?

A. The main thing we had to watch for was overambition in setting up what we'd like to do. If you have too many people going in too many places doing too many things at the same time, it becomes difficult for classroom coverage, and overloads an individual teacher with too many responsibilities. Because we are a small district, a small group of teachers dealing with these goals, the same people will show up on two or three committees, and they get tired after a while. So they attend a few religiously, and then they just can't make it to the rest. But we've gone around that problem this time and managed very well.

Q. What can be generalized about school improvement as a process from the Spencer experience? What did teachers learn about the process of change? This whole program is ultimately to affect the kids. Has it affected the kids?

A. Yes, it has ultimately affected the children. On the process of change, if anything, the main thing I think the teachers have learned is that change does not come instantly. You don't say you're going to do something and go out and do it. You must get into a planning process. You must identify whether or not the change is needed or wanted. Put the wheels in motion with people in a position to do something about it. It's affected many of their relationships in the school system because now we have a vehicle to make other changes in the future. Teachers are now more willing and more open about discussing things that they left alone before. They understand they can come forward and say they'd like to change something. We now can put a group of teachers together, discuss something, and come out with some action. This affects students primarily by our being able to make smooth changes in other

academic areas, say, curriculum. We have formalized a process for making change take place. We have, for example, now a report-card group. . . . We had an identified problem with identified people who were concerned, and one thing just rolled into another, and a committee was established to deal with it. They're working on changes in the reporting system. I'm getting recommendations, and hopefully we'll soon have a new report card. The teachers have also learned that individuals sometimes don't get their own way, that when working with large groups of people, you have to deal with what the majority of the group wants. There are some barriers that you have to be cautious of and really work on getting around.

Q. Do you think that there have been less tangible effects on the children? Do you think that the children have through the logo contest perhaps gone away with a different impression of the school and the relationship between the school and the community?

A. I really don't think that many of the children really understand what is happening in this whole process. They know their teachers are involved in meetings, and they hear the announcements about staff development. I'm not entirely sure it's filtered down to the children, to their understanding, yet. It may never get down there. However, I can't help but feel that they are going to receive benefits from this in the long run. They do get positive vibrations, yes.

Q. Do you have any recommendations? And would you like your school to participate in another project through the EMU-SDSI program?

A. I think the SDSI program is a very good one. It does provide something that otherwise would not be provided. It does promote internal cooperation within the school. It makes the staff in the school look at other schools and what they're doing because there are opportunities to get together. It gives us an opportunity to broaden our horizons. The key element is that the project is being run by the staff. The administrators in this case are just one of the group, and we do not influence the teachers at all. I think that is probably the initial intent of the staff development program, and that's what we've stuck to . . . Yes, I think that when we get ourselves settled for next year, I think we'll be interested in participating again.

CONCLUSION

Clearly, good things happened at Spencer Elementary School in Whitmore Lake as a result of the "teacher-owned" program for staff development. Students grew in their understanding of how school and community relate to each other and are interdependent, and they felt better about their school. Teachers became better acquainted with one another as people and as professionals, grew in their ability to work together, and experienced a new joy in sharing ideas, ideals, and experiences. Students and teachers alike learned that their administrators were friends who were truly interested in what went on outside the office door, and that their admin-

istrators could be trusted with both concerns and successes. For the principal, the walls of hostility and suspicion that separated him from the rest of the building started to crumble, and he welcomed and appreciated the new opportunities for interaction with students and staff. He enjoyed the sense of belonging and gained confidence and self-assurance in working with his staff.

Although when I wrote this, it was too soon to tell, I hope that the people of the community learned that their staff was dedicated, hardworking, and sincerely trying to make the best of difficult and often disheartening circumstances. There appeared to be a new sense of striving together for the common good and a greater commitment to improving the teaching-learning environment for the elementary school children of the district. Obviously, good things can happen when teachers take hold of their destiny, especially when they do it in their own way, in concert, and with spirit, conviction, and confidence.

7

Reflections on How to Be a Successful University Facilitator

Beth Van Voorhees

A unique aspect of the Eastern Michigan University Staff Development for School Improvement (SDSI) program is the use in schools of a facilitator from the university faculty. The university facilitator acts primarily as a resource person, a helper, a stimulator of ideas, and is a source of support throughout the school year rather than a one-shot visiting expert. This chapter reports my experience as a facilitator in three different schools and my reflections on that experience.

The facilitator's entree into a school district interested in the SDSI program is through a district coordinator. The district coordinator orients the facilitator to the district and to the school in which the staff development program is to be considered, and introduces the facilitator to the principal of that school. The principal arranges a time for the facilitator to explain the six-step process of the SDSI program to the building staff and offer them the opportunity to participate. This is the typical approach to the facilitator's getting involved with a school. It sounds simple but it is more complicated than it appears.

As a neophyte facilitator, I had some initial ideas about what might be required to launch a successful SDSI program in a school building, and I had some hunches about how teachers might respond to an overture. An offer of assistance in self-improvement often meets with subtle and not-so-subtle criticism and/or rejection, and the term *staff development* frequently generates resistance. Offering a faculty an opportunity to participate in school improvement can imply that their current practices, skills, and knowledge are less than adequate. Self-criticism may be accept-

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able, but external criticism often creates defensiveness. If a staff should infer from my initial presentation that the SDSI program was to help "shape them up," the chance of their agreeing to participate was dramatically reduced. I knew, therefore, that my initial presentation to a school staff would be critical to my getting acceptance of the program.

Selling the SDSI program, I surmised, would require tact, skill in communication, projection of a credible institutional image, trustworthiness, and, above all, a belief in and commitment to the idea being presented. I was to discover, however, that although the personality of the university facilitator and the quality of the program itself are important, other factors within each building eventually determine whether a staff agree to participate. Reviewing the chronology of my experience as a facilitator has helped me discover some of those other factors.

REPORT ON THE SCHOOLS: NUMBER 1

A medium-size high school with a student body of slightly less than 1,000 and a faculty of approximately 60 is located in a community near the university. Its staff was the first I approached. The school had been involved in a similar program the year before. The district coordinator told me that a needs assessment had been conducted and that the school staff had approved the project. I assumed that the first two steps of the SDSI process had been completed. A staff development committee was in place, with the assistant principal as a member. At my first meeting with the building committee, the task was to write the staff development plan for the year. Toward the middle of the meeting I sensed that the teachers and the assistant principal were not in agreement about what they wanted to do. I wondered if the SDSI program might be unclear to other teachers on the high school staff, and I was concerned about the level of staff commitment. So I suggested that they back up to Step 1, Awareness, because the 1981–82 SDSI program required a 75-percent commitment vote from the teachers involved. To prepare for a vote, a member of the staff development committee was selected to present the new SDSI program to colleagues at a faculty meeting and call for a vote on whether to participate. The vote failed to generate a 75-percent majority. The usual reaction to such a vote is to accept the decision and approach another school in the district. In this case the district coordinator intervened and decided to work through the project with the subject-area department heads and the high school counselors. A vote was taken in this new group. This time it was favorable.

Why did the initial vote fail with the total high school faculty and pass with a select group? I reflected on my initial impressions, my experience in presenting the opportunity, and the school staff with whom I had met.

Could I have done something differently? Should the feelings and reactions I had experienced in initial contacts have provided clues to the readiness of that staff to accept the SDSI program? What had I learned? Several thoughts went through my mind:

1. I had not made the initial presentation of the SDSI program to the staff. Conventional wisdom says that it is important to the success of the program to have third-party neutrality. I had not followed that advice. It was also important, I was told, for me to follow the steps of the SDSI process. I had assumed the first two steps had been completed. In fact, they had not been.

2. Did the general appearance of the building, its condition, reflect the feelings and the attitudes of the people who worked there? I remembered thinking that it would be difficult to feel good about working in a building that appeared so run down.

3. Communication among faculty members is important. The building committee took good communication for granted. The committee members assumed that colleagues supported their ideas and efforts. The negative vote proved their assumption to be wrong. Why the poor judgment?

4. Communication and trust between staff and administration are essential for teachers to participate in shared decision making. The intervention by the administrator in selecting a smaller group of teachers from within the original group destroyed the credibility of teacher ownership of the SDSI program.

5. Perhaps the size of the teaching staff was a negative factor. The vote failed with a group of 60 but was accepted by a subgroup of fewer than 20.

I think all of these factors affected the response to the SDSI program in the school. In addition, my lack of experience with the SDSI program and my assumption that I was dealing with teachers and administrators more experienced with staff development than I, caused me to be less of a catalyst, a helper, a resource person, than I might have been. Later on, as I became more comfortable working with the SDSI program and dealing with the public school people, my approach with the administration and the teachers was more effective.

REPORT ON THE SCHOOLS: NUMBER 2

My next assignment was to present the program to an elementary school staff in another district. The school enrollment of 300 students was described by the principal as being very transient. Students attended the school for a few months, left for a few months, and then returned. Their needs presented unique challenges to their teachers. There were about 18 teachers on the staff, led by a supportive, enthusiastic principal.

Two weeks after my meeting with the principal, I made a presentation to the school staff. They were attentive and polite. They asked these kinds of questions about the program:

Are there different levels of faculty participation?

Does the building committee do most of the work?

Who writes the proposal?

Will there be any requests for reports "due yesterday"?

What is the summer involvement?

What is the time line?

I can't believe there's no hidden agenda. What are we committing ourselves to?

Do the 25 percent who vote not to commit themselves to the program have to participate?

A task force of teachers was selected to investigate the possible benefits of participation in the program for both the teachers and the students in the school. There was some reluctance about serving on the task force. One teacher was overheard to say, "I'm not very good at receiving negatives from other teachers. I get along with everybody. I'm not sure I want to be a part of this task force." Nonetheless, the task force members did their job and came back to their colleagues with their feelings. Following the winter recess, a secret ballot was taken. Again a 75-percent favorable majority was not achieved.

Two rejections in two tries dampened my enthusiasm. What had I not attended to? Why had the program not generated a vote of acceptance? Was it my presentation? My delivery?

Consultation with the principal and the district coordinator reduced my concerns about my effectiveness in communicating with a school staff. Both felt that the teachers were not really ready to become involved. I should have realized their lack of readiness from the comments of the teachers who were reluctant to be part of the task force. The principal and the coordinator had hoped the teachers would buy in to an SDSI project because the SDSI program had the potential of bringing teachers together. But the outcome was not really a surprise to them.

I then attempted to assess why the faculty had rejected the SDSI program. These were my conclusions:

1. A "negative" power group existed in the school. I sensed from questions asked by some of the teachers at the first presentation that there were factions and cliques that controlled others by their negativism. Teachers who might have emerged as leaders were reluctant to be assertive for fear of sanction.

2. The staff were stable and mature. Although the teachers were not beginning teachers, they had not worked together long enough to function as a team. There had been a series of changes in the administration. Thus, although the principal appeared capable and I thought he could provide the leadership necessary to build a team, he simply had not been in the building long enough to establish himself as a leader.

3. Teachers did not have the time to be involved in extra commitments. Sometime after I had left this school but was still trying to find reasons for the staff's decision not to participate, I learned that a number of the teachers were parents of small children. Had they committed themselves to the SDSI program, it might have required sacrifice of home and family time.

4. Too much time had elapsed between the initial presentation and the commitment vote. Perhaps another year or another time of year this staff would have been receptive to the SDSI program.

REPORT ON THE SCHOOLS: NUMBER 3

With time running out I decided to try one more school. If it were to reject the project, there would not be sufficient time to try again until the next school year.

The principal of an elementary school located in the same district as the second school expressed interest in the SDSI program. The student population was about 300 students, with a staff of 20. It had the largest attendance area in the district, and all but a handful of students were transported to school by bus. The principal described the teaching staff as "together" and "receptive to new ideas."

We arranged to meet. This time the district coordinator decided not to be present at the initial presentation in order to reduce the presence of central administration. I made essentially the same presentation I had made at the second school. I used the rejection by that school as testimony to the credibility of the SDSI philosophy that we would withdraw if 75 percent of the staff were not in favor of becoming involved. The principal played an active role in the question-and-answer period that followed the presentation. Later that week the district coordinator met with the staff in small groups to answer lingering questions. Before a week had elapsed, a vote was taken and better than 75 percent of the staff voted to participate.

Later, when I felt as much a part of that elementary school staff as an outsider could, I asked several of the teachers why they had elected to participate. Here are some of their responses:

> Teacher 1: We're "doers" here. We get involved in things and we're enthusiastic about them.

Teacher 2: The staff is more mature. They're either single or have less family demands because their children are older.

Teacher 3: We have leaders and workers here. Everyone on the building committee is a leader.

Teacher 4: I can tell the climate of a building the minute I walk in the door, and I felt it here the first time I came. This staff is together as a group. They share, they work together, and there's been a history of positive leadership.

Teacher 5: There are no negative cliques here. We do have dissenters, but they don't undermine the ideas of others. We're professional, enthusiastic, stable, relaxed, and always ready to try new ideas.

The climate in the building was favorable for participation in the program. The building was attractive and clean. The school looked as though the people who worked there felt good about what they were doing. The bulletin boards were colorful. The classrooms were well organized for instruction. The students seemed happy to be in school.

Another important positive factor in the third school was the principal. He took an active supporting role. He was able to encourage teacher decision making without abdicating his responsibilities. His regular attendance at—and participation in—building-committee meetings demonstrated his endorsement of the project.

OUTCOMES IN THE PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

Two schools had, in different ways, become involved in the SDSI program. One was coaxed in, the other "bought in." One required a second vote by a subgroup of the original teacher group in order to qualify. The second qualified through a legitimate vote by the school staff. Following is a summary of my reflections on the outcomes at those two schools.

At the high school the steps of the SDSI program were compromised beginning with Step 1—Awareness. The reasons:

1. The SDSI program was in a transition stage when the high school became involved. At Eastern Michigan University we did not finalize the revisions in the process until the middle of the school year. I was a neophyte facilitator and this was my first school encounter.

2. There were pressures to address administrative priorities as an SDSI project, to use contractually provided time for inservice education to carry out the SDSI project, and to work from a proposal from the previous year.

The contract provided biweekly release time for the teachers for staff development and other school-related activity. There was pressure on the building committee to generate activities to fill that release time and to relate those activities to the SDSI project goals. Writing the plan was a year-long project for the committee. They carried out the activities as they

wrote the plan. The plan and most of the activities were completed at the same time—near the end of the school year.

In the elementary school a needs assessment was carried out the first week after acceptance of the SDSI program. All the steps in the program were followed in order. A proposal was completed two weeks after the needs assessment, money for implementation was granted, and the project began. The staff, following the time line they drafted, worked together and accomplished more than they believed they could. Their accomplishments included the involvement of 53 parent and community volunteers in screening children for kindergarten, helping in the classroom, organizing reading and math resource materials, supervising a student-run store, and supervising a creative arts program. The teachers wrote job descriptions and trained the volunteers. What resulted was a school-home partnership and school-community goodwill. This school became a model of the SDSI program.

CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of my experience with the three schools I conclude tentatively that the factors I identified earlier—tact, skill in communication, projection of a credible institutional image, trustworthiness, and a belief in and commitment to the program—are indeed important, but they do not necessarily guarantee the involvement of a school staff in the program. The most critical elements overall may be the school climate and the faculty's readiness. The readiness factors that I will continue to explore prior to an initial presentation to a school faculty are these:

1. How free are the teachers to engage in staff development activities? Are there personal needs outside the school program (such as family) that compete for teachers' time and energy?

2. Are the teachers reasonably secure in their teaching situation? Have they established positive collegial relationships? Are they comfortable with their subject area or grade level? Do they know the system—especially what activities are recognized in the system's rewards?

3. What is the teacher-administrator relationship? Is it perceived as collegial? Is the building/system leadership based on the power and the authority of the administrator? Is there open communication? Is there mutual trust? Is the administrator excited about the program?

4. Is the year or the time of year appropriate for becoming involved in a staff development program? (A school staff who rejects the program one month or one year may accept it another time.)

The university facilitator seems important in every step of the process but especially critical in the beginning. For the validity of the SDSI pro-

gram to be tested, the teachers have to *want* to participate. I think it takes much skill and time to establish credibility and third-party neutrality. Initially I found it difficult to respond to the administrators without compromising the teachers' concerns, to respond to teachers' concerns without alienating the administrators, and all the while to insist that the steps of the SDSI program be followed. In the beginning I assumed that I would achieve nearly instant acceptance by the teachers. I learned that the SDSI program and I had to earn acceptance, and that takes time and planning.

Part of that planning includes assessing the school climate and the readiness of the staff to become involved in the project. Not all schools will be ready at the same time. I would like to think that a skilled facilitator could influence readiness, could get every school that is approached to participate in the SDSI program. My experience tells me that is an unrealistic expectation. Not every school that is approached will want to participate.

Flexibility and open-mindedness are important qualities in a facilitator. Not every school will look exactly alike as the teachers move through each step. However, I believe the six-step process should be followed if the program is to be successful. The steps ensure teacher commitment, teacher ownership, and finally a workable program of relevant staff development.

8

University-Public School Collaboration: A Personal Perspective

Marylyn Lake

Being a university facilitator has been a growth experience for me. It has helped me gain greater confidence in working with a variety of different types of school people. It has helped me acquire a better understanding of the secondary school and the demands on high school teachers in content areas. Before becoming a facilitator, I knew about schools as a special education person but not as a content person. Most important to my professional growth has been the stimulation that the facilitator role has given me to think about the problems of education and the vitality that it has fostered by keeping me in contact with children and teachers in public schools.

MAINTAINING A REALITY BASE

My first teaching experience was in public schools, and my initial role in higher education was as a laboratory-school teacher; in the latter assignment I also taught a few college courses during the summer and in the evening. All of this work was in special education. My experience teaching children provided the wealth of information and insights about the real world of teaching that is needed to work with prospective teachers in the university. It gave me ready illustrations of, for example, instructional materials that worked, strategies to manage a disruptive child, and teaching techniques that I had used.

In my early jobs I also worked with prospective teachers in pre-student-teaching laboratory experiences. There the challenge was bridging the gap

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between teaching theory and the methods that are used in the classroom. I had to know the real demands on teachers in schools—the pressure of increased loads, the restraints of tighter budgets, and the demands for accountability.

Since I stopped working with student teachers and started teaching prospective teachers full-time, I have become apprehensive about losing the reality base that I had when I had regular contact with children and schools. I am afraid that my illustrations of teaching strategies, effective management approaches, or parent interactions will get stale; they are so important in conveying to prospective teachers what teaching is really like. I have heard that professors are often viewed as out of touch or in ivory towers. I do not want those phrases applied to me.

These apprehensions have caused me to be very deliberate about the university activities I have undertaken. I have strived to remain in touch with children, teachers, and the general state of public education. I feel fortunate that following my full-time employment as a teacher of children, I had not only an opportunity to teach university courses, but also a chance to develop a variety of linkages with the public schools. These experiences have served me well in becoming a more effective university teacher. I have had many opportunities to observe teachers teaching and students learning, and I have grown from interacting with both teachers and students. These experiences have also contributed to the upgrading and the updating of the teacher training program in which I am currently involved. I have, for example, stayed in touch with developments in the mainstreaming of special education students and the planning of individual education programs for them, and I have found ways to deal with these developments in our teacher education program.

GROWTH OUTSIDE MY SPECIALIZATION

In my recent experience as a facilitator in the Staff Development for School Improvement (SDSI) program I have had a new opportunity, a chance to work outside my primary area of expertise, a chance to work as a generalist. Although I have always felt competent in my own field, the facilitator role has provided an opportunity to grow beyond my specialization. I have increased my interaction with both general and special education teachers, and my primary role has changed. I no longer focus on disseminating information or guiding teachers or students in using a known commodity, knowledge and skills in special education. Rather, I guide teachers in the discovery process. I assist them in identifying their own needs and selecting strategies to address those needs. Process has become more important than content.

OTHER BENEFITS

I have also gained in a number of other ways. For me, learning has become a shared experience with teachers. I have developed increased sensitivity to the informal networks that work within the schools and the school districts, the intermediate school district, and the university. I have become more aware of the interplay between personalities and political systems, and the different agendas that influence effective communication in public school agencies. I have sharpened my techniques in assisting a group, for example, in defining individual or group needs. I have become more skilled in listening, in helping teachers redefine abstract thoughts and shape them into concrete reachable goals. An illustration of this is the work some teachers and I are doing to improve curriculum. Together we have been able to redefine a particular curriculum and see various parts of the curriculum in perspective—for example, helping students learn to write, in both the short term and the long term. I have been an "objective outsider," a neutral party, someone to bounce ideas off of, a person who doesn't have supervisory responsibility in the system. I have also been able to provide a linkage to outside resources, to successful programs in other communities.

At the same time the skills that I have learned and continue to develop through classroom teaching, educational consulting, and various professional leadership positions have all been vital in helping me carry out my responsibilities as a facilitator. I have become more comfortable and confident with people outside my field. I have become more aware of what special education teachers need to know to work at the secondary school level—something that has always been a concern of special educators.

The importance of remaining sensitive to both the cognitive and the affective needs of teachers has been reinforced in my experiences as a facilitator. Maybe I have become particularly sensitive to the affective needs of teachers—that sometimes they just need to talk and have someone listen, that sometimes all they need is to hear that they are doing a good job. Although the information needs of the schools assigned to me do not always relate to my special education training, the skills I have learned through meeting the individual learning/behavior needs of special students have been beneficial in addressing the diverse concerns of teachers teaching all children.

Maybe most important, I have learned that as an effective facilitator—an ambassador to the community, if you will—I foster ease of action. I operate as a process person. I provide the vehicle through which teachers can identify and address their perceived needs in the most effective, efficient manner. I provide perspective. I help teachers look elsewhere. I help

them look across subject areas and recognize what is common. I remain current on the present status of staff development and school improvement so that I can help others.

My role as a facilitator requires that I establish rapport with a school's principal as well as with its teachers. Without rapport, I could not serve effectively as a resource person.

Being a facilitator has also allowed me to observe my own behavior. I have recognized strengths that allow me to work effectively with teachers and students with varied educational backgrounds and concerns. I have learned to become an effective listener, an effective synthesizer and organizer of ideas. I have come to regard secondary school staff as colleagues. I have become more aware of the continuity between elementary and secondary schools. As a result of knowing myself better, I have become more effective in helping teachers improve curriculum and communications.

UNIVERSITY-PUBLIC SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

In the broader scheme of things I have realized that greater intercommunication is vital to the success of public schools and higher education. The university, particularly the college of education, is in a period of transition. Although education enrollments are declining, there is still the opportunity to improve the quality of teacher education. Smaller classes and fewer sections can lead to more innovative programming. Such opportunities make it even more essential that professors teaching methods courses and perspectives on public education be familiar with the education field at large. Prospective teachers must know what is happening in our schools. One day soon there will be a great need for teachers.

When communication between the university and the public schools is high quality, there are some rare opportunities for practical research. The relationship also fosters a productive dialogue between people at two levels of education interested in similar topics, which inevitably leads to introspection by both parties. Some of the exemplary programs in schools can be identified and given needed visibility. And public school personnel can get some needed recognition. With collaboration university and school personnel gain greater respect for each other.

Today more than ever before, teacher educators need the schools. Even though public schools are having financial difficulties, they can still offer a practicum for prospective teachers, and schools are the only place teacher educators can view the real world of American K-12 education. University teachers need to observe children in school settings in order to prepare prospective teachers realistically, whether in old fare like the three R's or in the new technologies. The direction of the sharing, in this instance, is clearly from the school to the university.

I have found that the opportunities for professional growth through university–public school cooperation are of equal importance to the growth I have experienced in college teaching. The responsibilities of working in schools are oftentimes more demanding than those of teaching college courses, but there is no better way to explode the myth of the ivory tower or to alleviate one's personal insecurities about teaching new subject matter than to keep in close contact with public education. The public school must be willing to involve outside support, however, and the university must be willing to identify, invite, and encourage qualified professors to engage in field-based activities. Most professors involved with the public schools are aware of the energy and the exertion that university–public school collaboration demands, but recognize that the rewards in professional satisfaction and growth outweigh the extra effort required.

THE FACILITATOR'S ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Let me share my perceptions of the roles and the responsibilities of the university facilitator:

Roles

- A process consultant
- An ambassador for the university
- A resource for program implementation
- A link to the resources of the university and of other agencies.

Responsibilities

- Stay current on research and practice in staff development and school improvement.
- Be involved in all six steps of the SDSI process.
- Establish rapport with the principal and the teachers of the assigned schools.
- Conduct building-committee training sessions.
- Visit the assigned schools about once a week.
- Write regularly about the progress in assigned schools.
- Make a final evaluation report on each assigned school.
- Attend professional meetings and conferences in connection with the program.
- Describe the program at state and national meetings.

PROBLEMS

The SDSI program has a few problems, of course; it is not utopia. For example, the university does not yet recognize adequately the merits of collaborative programs, nor does it provide adequate incentives for professors to be involved. Neither is there sufficient recognition in the state for the university and the communities involved. Moreover, only a few

university faculty see the professional growth opportunities for themselves and eventually for their students in programs such as ours.

Support, financial and otherwise, is not adequate for our program. For example, university facilitators still work on an overload basis. Collaboration with schools has not yet become an integral, legitimate part of the university professor's role. The fact that programs like this take time to develop and produce results has not been accepted very widely. There needs to be a commitment of time to the program so that a reasonable job can be done.

TOTTING UP THE PLUSES AND THE MINUSES

Despite the problems, being involved in this staff development program gives me a special feeling of pride, a unique sense of achievement. I remember the years I spent teaching children as rewarding ones. I find continuing rewards in interactions with public school personnel, and I keep learning from these encounters. Staying in touch with children, teachers, and school administrators is expanding my knowledge of interpersonal communications and secondary education, and I have met many people who make up a rich network of expertise. I have been reassured that I have knowledge to share, and I have been rewarded by observing teachers discover that they can share with one another. A renewed excitement about teaching, a deeper respect for another's expertise, and a renewed sense of self-worth are among my rewards.

When I tot up the pluses and the minuses of our program, I come out with a balance that leans heavily in the positive direction. From the chances I have had to look at other programs, I find the Eastern Michigan University approach more productive than the approach in most other places. It improves programs for teachers, administrators, and students in the public schools, and it also helps make professional life more vital and stimulating for a group of professors. I think other professors would find the experience very rewarding.

9

Personal Reflections of a Staff Development Coordinator

Larry J. Thomas

In early September 1981, because of financial problems, administrators in Taylor School District (Taylor, Michigan) decided to delay opening school until another millage election could take place. Cutbacks in staff and program had already cost me my position as a staff development facilitator; I had been reassigned to a classroom. Naturally I was concerned about my future, so I began applying for other jobs, looking for employment in staff development. I had spent two years as a staff development facilitator in the district and had meanwhile finished a specialist degree in staff development. It was an area I was anxious to stay in.

On September 10 I had a telephone call from the director of the Taylor School District staff development office, my previous boss. She told me that Eastern Michigan University (EMU) was looking for a coordinator for its staff development program, and she suggested that I call the new director of EMU's National Center on Teaching and Learning (NCTL), who managed the program. I had had experience as a staff development consultant for EMU, having conducted some sessions explaining what their program was about and having facilitated needs assessments to help staffs get started in the program.

The director of the NCTL agreed to see me, and we hit it off right away. Our perceptions were compatible. There were good vibrations between us. She felt very positive about me, and I felt very positive about her. She liked my ideas on staff development, and I felt good about her direction—I agreed with where she wanted to go. I think she was impressed with my experience in staff development. I knew what most of the school districts in EMU's program had done the previous year.

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I was offered the job at the end of the interview. I was excited about the opportunity to coordinate a program that was familiar to me. I felt comfortable with the program's staff development process because I had worked with it. However, I was not sure what my role would be. Would I be allowed to coordinate the program, or would I just be a maintenance person, continuing what was under way? Would I be allowed to use my ideas? Would my experience and my knowledge of how teachers felt about the program be taken into consideration?

In spite of those concerns I was anxious to get started. I was convinced that the process had the potential to improve schools and that school personnel would see the possible benefits and be glad to be involved.

As I began to work at EMU, new concerns developed. Why would a university ask a public school person to coordinate a program in which university professors would perform the major duties? I was concerned about professors accepting a coordinator who did not have a PhD. I was not sure they would acknowledge my experience as significant. I knew what was going on in schools, but I was not sure professors would be willing to listen. I was also concerned about developing a collegial relationship with professors. I knew I was going to have to do many things to get them to look at me as an equal. I was not sure how or if I was going to be able to build a productive relationship.

I had no fears about working with school personnel because I had done that before and had been successful. My number one anxiety was developing a successful relationship with professors. I have to be candid and say that I probably felt as many public school people do about professors. I thought of a professor the way one of Drummond's sources thought about a college of education: "a giraffe—it is tall, aloof, elegant; it eats leaves that other animals cannot reach; it enjoys the sun; its head is in the trees; it runs gracefully; it does not set its own directions; it finds it difficult to get down to ground level" (Drummond, 1980, p. 41). I knew I had to approach the relationship very carefully and not let professors know my preconceptions of them.

I was not quite sure how the NCTL director was going to accept me either. She was experienced and intelligent, and I knew I could learn much from her. So I watched closely to see how she handled the office. I also watched to see how she would allow me to work with the program. She gave me freedom and seemed genuinely concerned about my ideas. In my experience in education that was unique. I had never before felt free to use my creative ideas. There was definitely open communication. We listened to each other. She did not talk down to me; she talked with me, and I enjoyed that.

PHASE 1: GETTING ESTABLISHED

One of my first duties was to attend a meeting of representatives from various school districts that had participated in the program in previous years. At the meeting the NCTL director introduced me as the new coordinator. I was very proud, but also very cautious. I knew many of the people because of my previous experience. Some of the school district administrators expressed apprehension about the elements of the program (which was thought to be successful) being changed. I think they were apprehensive because the NCTL director and I were both new and they did not know what we meant in saying we were committed to developing a quality program. Some school district administrators were wary about how we intended to accomplish that task. They seemed primarily concerned about two matters, procedures for disbursement of funds and program evaluation. Their exact words were "Be light on requirements."

Both the NCTL director and I felt that the program had too many loose ends and that these would have to be dealt with in the further development of the program, so we decided to hire an outside consultant to work with us on evaluation, programmatic concerns, and development of collegiality with university professors. The consultant would be a third eye to observe and subsequently recommend program improvements. We contracted with a consultant for one year.

Selecting the Facilitators

Organizing the program was a challenge. I still was not sure of my role as coordinator. The NCTL director confirmed that I would assist professors who would do consultant work in the schools. Our first task was to discover how to find professors who would be effective in this type of work.

Finding people who could function as process, not content, consultants—as facilitators—was a major goal. I thought professors would try to impose their ideas. I assumed they would want to act as university liaisons, resource or research agents, and not as helping or humanistic facilitators.

The NCTL director advertised throughout the university for anyone who was interested in working with public schools. She invited people to sessions to learn about the program. During these exploratory sessions the director and I related what the program had been in previous years, what we were hoping could happen this year, and what the facilitators' responsibilities would be.

I have already indicated some of my concerns about professors working

with public school teachers. I felt a little relieved after I talked with them. Most had personalities that would make them successful anywhere. But some came on like "giraffes."

After the exploratory sessions the director asked me to interview each professor who had indicated an interest. For me this was really important because instead of her making the decision unilaterally, she wanted to know who I thought would be effective, and why She was trying, I thought, to get a feel for how a school district person perceived the candidates.

I was not solely responsible for making the selections; we talked about the candidates and made the selections together. I felt that the primary element for success was personality. They were to be process consultants, so it was not important that they be experts in subject areas. Instead, they should be willing to listen, to share concepts and feelings, and to try to understand the problems of today's teacher. I was looking for people who understood and used interpersonal skills effectively.

In the beginning the director hesitated to encourage me to conduct the meetings with the facilitators. She was not sure how capable I was, and needed to test me. She started meetings and looked to see how I handled myself. I knew I could get along with professors, but I was not sure whether we could become colleagues.

Orienting the Facilitators

Toward the end of October our consultant, the director, and I planned an orientation session for the facilitators. Our consultant knew about successful staff development programs nationwide. The director understood the intricacies of working with universities and professors. My strong suit was knowledge about what schools were like and how public school teachers perceived university intervention.

The three of us decided that we would ask the university facilitators two questions: How do K-12 teachers regard university professors? How do university professors view K-12 teachers? All of them agreed that they were probably perceived as being out of touch, too academic, lacking in understanding of the day-to-day reality in schools, theory oriented, and unaware of teachers' problems. Their view of K-12 teachers surprised me: The professors saw teachers as generally well trained; having an enormous task, often against overwhelming odds; overworked; having too many students; hardworking; needing help but not being willing to take it; and having an eroded self-image. The professors had great respect for K-12 people, but felt that K-12 people had little respect for them.

We discussed ideas for breaking down these barriers. Many suggestions centered on becoming more sensitive to people. Two comments I espe-

cially remember were "There is always something to learn from K-12 teachers" and "We shouldn't be reluctant to inconvenience ourselves to serve teachers and schools."

It was already late fall and we still had not started working in the schools. Time always seemed to be a major problem. I felt that the best and fastest way to help the facilitators get started was to take them through some of the tasks we expected them to perform in the schools. This would help in two ways. First, the professors would learn the process; second, I would learn what the facilitators wanted. We discussed the necessary commitment of the school district, which had to be established before we entered a school; that is, a commitment from the central administration, the building administration, and the teacher organization had to be assured before we approached a teaching staff. We talked about needs assessments, and they participated in one.

To demonstrate my credibility, I had to provide facilitators with assistance in the areas they identified. In doing that I wanted to illustrate the type of behavior that we hoped they would exhibit in schools. I tried to be open, candid, and forthright, offering my assistance in any area I could. I indicated my willingness to visit schools with them if they felt a need for my presence. I wanted them to see me as a helping agent.

Contacting Schools

I also felt that I should get a handle on the school people's perceptions of the program, so I contacted every school. Among other things I discovered that many districts were not aware of our process and that some participants could not remember information about their own project. Obviously my enthusiasm for the program was not shared by all the participants. Some were hesitant to discuss their problems. Some seemed to see the program more as a source of money than as an opportunity to work on staff development. Each school developed its own plan and did what the staff wanted to do. That turned out to be productive in most places but was abused in others.

Revitalizing the Program

After many discussions the director, the facilitators, our consultant, and I agreed that the program needed considerable revitalization. That would take time, and the facilitators would have to be aware that the program would be developing as they were implementing it.

At the outset we recognized that this was a pilot program funded by the state legislature, so, in addition to running the program, we needed to gather evidence to show its merits. To be able to share evidence of accomplishments that would be comparable across sites or with other programs,

we had to develop some common requirements for all the sites and find a way to evaluate those accomplishments. I felt strongly that my role should be to represent the local schools and make sure that any new requirements would not destroy the integrity of this teacher-centered program.

Agreeing on requirements helped to clarify the program. They dealt with basic premises; for example, ours was a building-level model of inservice education, school faculties had to agree to follow our six-step model, facilitators would make regular visits to schools, procedures existed for disbursement of funds, etc. However, the focus of each project was still to be decided by the teachers in each building. The teacher-centered concept had prevailed. The major premise was still a commitment to shared decision making.

Not all the school districts were pleased with our revitalized process. There was some negative feedback: "You should provide us with funds and let us do our own program" and "If you try to evaluate, you will destroy the program." I tried to assure all the school people that we were aware of their concerns and that the change would enhance rather than hamper the program. My role was beginning to include being a mediator.

Gaining Momentum

It was the end of December. My relationship with the facilitators had grown. As they had directed questions at me during our meetings, my experience in the public schools and my competence in staff development had become clear. The perceptions I had shared with them on how a teacher might respond had proved accurate. They were developing more trust in me and the NCTL office. They were opening up more and sharing their concerns. The facilitators and the staff in the NCTL office were becoming a team.

The program was heading in a new direction. School people were becoming concerned with more than just staff development. The director, the facilitators, our consultant, and I decided to direct the program at staff development for school improvement and to take that aim as a title.

During this time we realized that our program was gaining the attention of many people inside and outside Michigan. Also, we recognized two organizational problems. First, we needed to bring more order to certain elements of our program. We developed a time line for the remainder of the year that included budget guidelines, reporting procedures, evaluation, a meeting of the principals, communication with districts, and dealing with the facilitators' growth. The time line gave us an idea where we wanted to be at the end of the year. Second, we needed a clear, written record that included some evidence of program effectiveness. The major consideration was, Did the program work? I was convinced from my

previous experience that the program could make a difference. But how could we show that to educators, state legislators, etc.?

PHASE 2: SURVIVING THE TESTS AND THE PROBLEMS

During the first three months (October, November, and December), everyone was getting used to one another, and projects were getting started. By January much of the dust had settled and my mediator role had become more pronounced. Some districts were testing the requirements that we had set. For example, they were asking for their total allocation of funds without developing a plan. Some schools were following arrangements that had been developed in prior years without trying to adapt to the newly established premises. I had to be cautious not to threaten the participation of schools that did not follow the rules. I reminded them that their school faculty and district had to follow certain requirements and that standard procedures existed for plans, disbursements, etc. We emphasized that the plan should justify a budget; there would not be just a flat amount of money for each school. In most cases I managed to reiterate requirements without offending anyone.

During this time I was also attending conferences, and I got interested in what was happening in staff development in other places. Two insights came to me: (1) Our program was unusual when compared with most of the programs I heard about. Ours was teacher centered, developed through shared decision making. So many others were designed and implemented by people other than classroom teachers. (2) Politics at both the state and the national level were very important in staff development; for example, they affected programs such as ours.

By mid-winter we were getting settled in the schools, and some common themes were emerging. Certain factors were making the program more successful. For example, there seemed to be a correlation between program success and the frequency of the facilitators' visits.

Many of the districts that had been involved in the program in previous years were still not committed to the new requirements. Some administrators were not letting teachers make decisions on inservice education, and some of the teachers were not operating by a plan that involved a whole staff working together. In some cases the teachers and the principals were working on the same premises that they had followed for two or three years.

In the continuing development of the facilitators, we decided that it would be helpful to take them through a successful program at a school that had been involved for three years. The staff of that school explained to the facilitators what they had accomplished during those three years—how they had started, how they had developed their plans, and

how they had implemented those plans. That session was very helpful to the facilitators. Not only the facilitators and the teachers, but also the principal of the school and the superintendent of the district, attended it. The superintendent's comments were particularly valuable. He told the teachers, the principal, and EMU's staff that the staff development program had effected many changes in the district. Before the school's involvement in staff development, it had been the least desirable place to work in the district, the superintendent said. Now, due to three years in the program, it was very popular with all the district's teachers. Many practices initiated by this school had been adopted district-wide, he said. Also, the attitudes of the teachers in the school had changed; they used to be a staff of talented individuals, but now they were a staff working together. This evidence further convinced me of the merits of the program. But was there a way to prove them?

Some problems started to surface at about this time. A few of the facilitators did not completely agree with the philosophy of teacher-centered programs and were not keen on functioning as process consultants. They were not convinced that they wanted to do what we were doing. However, they stayed with us.

Most of the facilitators definitely had a commitment to the program, however. They felt that they were not only members of the university faculty, but also members of the school staffs whom they were working with. They developed a kinship with the school people. They expressed concern for the success of the whole program beause they felt that it was theirs. The group became more of a team. When we met every other week, they talked about their successes. They talked about *their* program, not the NCTL's program.

Of course, we realized that not all the districts would progress at an equal rate. Some changed quickly, usually those with no experience of the old program. The districts that had been involved in the program in prior years had a difficult time. But there was give-and-take: We changed some aspects of the program, and we recognized that we could not change some other aspects right away but we hoped that we could in a year's time and then we might also measure growth. We were consistent and firm about requirements, but not rigid. We discontinued programs in only two schools, out of 20.

PHASE 3: SEEING SATISFACTORY RESULTS

In March I started having individual meetings with the facilitators, with three results: (1) I was better able to identify the concerns of the facilitators, what was bothering them, what they were trying to work out, etc. (2) I was able to share with them how I thought the schools were

responding to what they were trying. (3) I had the opportunity to offer some help.

In the process I discovered that I had developed an effective relationship with the professors and that I was developing relationships with other people at other universities. Evidence of the latter was a professor at another university asking me to coauthor an article with him. I think that was because he recognized the quality of our program.

It was now April. We started to feel better about evaluation. An evaluation instrument and a scheme for evaluation had taken shape, partially as a result of our consultant's help. We had established a format for gathering data, and by the end of the year there would be something to share. What we wanted was not "75 percent of the people attended the workshop" or "80 percent were happy about the program." We wanted to know what had happened to people, what information they had gained, what changes had occurred in behavior and skills for both teachers and students, and what changes had occurred in the curriculum of the school and in the relationships between the school and the parents and the community.

In April, visiting a district to discuss a minor problem, I found out by accident that the teachers and administrators were very pleased that I would visit. They felt that EMU was interested in what they were doing. This incident caused me to think that I should visit all the schools, to convey the feeling that the university cared about their project.

I did not visit any school without the appropriate facilitator, and the facilitator always made the visit arrangements. I did not want to give the impression that I was checking to see if the facilitators were doing their job. I was trying to give the districts more recognition for their efforts. When I visited I got a completely different reception than I had on earlier visits. At the beginning of the year teachers and administrators had been apprehensive about why I was there—were they being monitored? Now they were pleased to share what they were doing. There was pride in the program. They were complimented that an EMU representative was there to look at their progress.

About this time we also started discussing characteristics essential for a successful facilitator. We were both analyzing what was working the current year and anticipating requirements for an enlarged force the next year. The very first characteristic facilitators identified was follow-through. I was amazed. When I had talked with facilitators previously on an individual basis, they had identified interpersonal skills, being able to get along with people, as primary. Now, as a group, they identified follow-through. They did not seem to recognize the importance of their own interpersonal skills at times. Toward the end of the year they started to realize that interpersonal skills were essential.

As the year moved along, we realized the need for a meeting of principals. We planned and scheduled such a meeting, and every principal came except a few who were not convinced of the philosophy of shared decision making. Several points came out at the meeting. For one, principals said they would like more emphasis put on the principal.

Principals measured the success of the program in their building in many different ways. One reported that before the program had started, teachers had shown up 10 minutes before school started. Since the program had been in operation, the parking lot had been full an hour to an hour-and-a-half before school. Another principal told of a high school coach who had never attended any meetings after school because he was coaching. Now his assistant coach covered the practice while he attended the meetings for staff development. In yet another school, in which earlier open houses had never been attended by more than 50 people, 375 people had come to the last one.

During May we became aware that the facilitators were developing ownership of the program. In our biweekly meetings they were starting to give presentations on their school project, talking about their own writings on staff development, and sharing their experiences.

One successful and developing relationship throughout the year was that of the consultant, the director of the NCTL, and me—an expert on staff development nationwide, an expert on intrauniversity relationships, and an advocate for local school districts, respectively. I think the combination of our three diverse backgrounds made the program successful. We agreed that the program kept its school emphasis because I had an understanding of local schools.

As I mentioned earlier, at the beginning of the year I was very concerned about working with a group of PhDs. But I came to appreciate them, and they, me. I found that we had different types of expertise. The facilitators and the consultant learned to look to me for knowledge about local schools. Their different types of expertise seemed to complement mine. I also discovered that a low-key, responsive style of leadership was best for me.

I firmly believed that the most important person in the program was the facilitator. I kept letting the facilitators know that and made sure they got recognition. They later said that they were pleased with how I had worked with them and that they had enjoyed working with me.

SOME CONCLUSIONS

Our working group at NCTL came to several conclusions that year. The successful program always seemed to have a strong, dedicated principal who believed in it. Also, we were continually reminded, change took time.

We could not go into a building and expect improvements immediately. Time was needed to allow people to believe in the program, to develop ownership of the program, and to start to do things that made a difference. We learned too that we could not ignore politics. Because the funds for this program were appropriated by the legislature, we had to be especially aware of political considerations, recognizing that eventually lawmakers would want evidence of the program's merits. We recognized too that we were working not only on revitalizing public schools but also on revitalizing the university and the professors who were working with the program. Actually these professors were using ideas from the public school people in their university classroom. They were also becoming aware of the problems that teachers faced in schools. The university was getting recognition throughout the state because of its sponsorship of the program.

Looking back, I see progress in three phases. The first three months were basically spent establishing the program. We were finding facilitators, getting them into schools, and assisting schools in starting projects. Another part of the year we were testing the waters in the districts, trying to ensure that the requirements were being followed. The last three months everything fell together; even the districts that were testing us started following the requirements of the program. Quality seemed to be coming out of our efforts.

PERSONAL GROWTH

I learned a lot about myself that year. With experience I gained skills. With encouragement I gained confidence. I had the chance to grow because of the exciting and dynamic people whom I worked with. My relationship with the director was especially important. She listened to me, respected my ideas, and helped direct my creative energy. She was candid and critical. She expected excellence and provided room for me to grow. She helped me learn from my mistakes and applauded my successes. I grew immeasurably. She also supported the project with a great team.

The consultant provided breadth to the program. His insight and experience added tremendous perspective to my conception of education, and his contribution to the scheme of our process gave it crucial definition and structure. His excellence as a writer and an editor dramatically increased my ability to communicate clearly.

Working at EMU made me recognize my prejudice about university people. I found that they were not all "giraffes." The professors who became the facilitators, who took an active interest in the program and the schools, were people who could be effective in any setting. They recognized that knowledge and expertise could emanate from many different sources, and we learned much from one another.

As we worked together, we lit a spark. Each person was talented and creative, but we were more than just a group of individuals working together. We became a unit. The director of NCTL, the consultant, and I, supported by the facilitators and a warm and productive office staff, created synergy. By using knowledge, talent, and experience from our different perspectives, we created a whole that was more dynamic and effective than the sum of its parts. Representing the national educational community, the university perspective, and the local school district perspective, our team had the knowledge to succeed. Even more significant, our mutual warmth and respect helped us create a vital and responsive process. We were a unique combination in the right place at the right time.

I think I got more from the experience than anyone. Clearly I gained knowledge and experience. I learned some new skills and sharpened old ones, but, most important to me, the friends I gained during that year gave me some wonderful gifts. They gave me a feeling of self-worth and the realization that I have something significant to offer. They gave me challenges and helped me reach those challenges. They gave me the skills and the confidence to plan a bright and exciting future.

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10

An Outsider's Critique of the Program

Roy A. Edelfelt

The first question decision makers raise about staff development is usually, Is it doing the job?—the job being helping teachers and administrators improve. Improvement means many things: staying current in a content area, refining teaching skills and strategies, learning to work more effectively with colleagues, improving school climate. In the final analysis the questions are, Does a school have better teachers? Better programs for students? Do students learn more and better because teachers and administrators take part in staff development activities?

This chapter will ultimately answer those questions in terms of the evidence collected on the Staff Development for School Improvement (SDSI) program at Eastern Michigan University (EMU). At the outset I can say that the answer is unequivocally yes to all of them. I wish the data were more definitive and precise, but such an expectation is premature for a program that has only just clarified its ground rules and procedures, and qualitative data are always less precise than quantitative data.

OVERVIEW

Not until 1981–82 did the SDSI program solidify to the point at which one could begin to evaluate results. And not until 1981–82 did comprehensive evaluation begin to become a deliberate and integral part of the program.

In 1981–82 there was also new leadership—a new director of the National Center on Teaching and Learning (NCTL), which administers the program, and a new coordinator of the program. And, whereas in prior years two university facilitators had handled an excessive load in serving

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18–20 schools, in 1981–82 seven new university facilitators were employed, all with no experience in the program.

The new people brought new interpretations and persuasions to the program. They accepted the so-called Taylor Model that the program employed, but they brought a different style and expanded goals to it. The new team found both good and poor implementation of the model under way. Practice varied widely among the schools, and there were great differences in the degree to which schools adhered to the model.

Problems were more than in the schools. It took time to get a new team at the NCTL up to speed, to orient a new group of university facilitators, and to find a place in the university community. Even knowing what questions to ask was a problem for NCTL staff.

There were other problems as well. The relationship of the funding of the SDSI program to the state's Professional Development Program was vague. For example, some schools were literally unaware of the per-teacher allocation of funds and the fact that teachers counted under one program could not receive funds under the other program. Collaboration with the Michigan Department of Education's Office of Professional Development served to clarify that problem.

ESTABLISHING A SYSTEM

One of the first steps the new administration of the SDSI program took was to establish some ground rules for program procedures, decision making, university-school relationships, roles and responsibilities of participating schools and personnel, and budget. As with most other rule making, these basic assumptions, initially called givens, were developed with the people and the schools involved, and rules were not changed for the projects in midstream.

In most cases the ground rules grew out of the original intent and spirit of the Taylor Model. Typically judgments about what had been were not made, although it was clear, even to an outsider, that the operation had been too loose, program intent had sometimes been abused, and the program was not in high repute locally or across Michigan. The attitude of the new NCTL team was not to dwell on the past. It was rather to fine-tune the management and the operation of the program, and that was seen as an evolutionary process. For example, it was clear at the outset that the new university facilitators required orientation, so one of the first activities in fall 1981 was an orientation session. The session continued as a seminar at least once a month throughout the year. Another change early in the year was enlarging the program's scope and changing its name from Professional Development to Staff Development for School Improvement. The intent was clear: The program leaders wanted to help schools institute a

model of staff development, but they also wanted to ensure that what was learned became part of the school's regular program.

A START ON EVALUATION

Also recognized was the need to do more about evaluation. As early as July 1981 the director wrote to me, "What has been lacking is a sound evaluation process that can determine the effectiveness of the individual EMU-sponsored professional development program pursued by each school/district, and thereby verify the effectiveness of the Taylor Model" (Warnat, 1981). She also indicated a need to follow up with schools/districts where plans had been completed to ascertain whether the staff development model had been institutionalized. The desire to evaluate brought me into the project as a consultant a few days each month for the entire school year.

Evaluation always requires data. Even before much was done to make the Taylor Model more precise, SDSI staff started documenting meetings, putting ground rules in writing, and generally keeping track on paper of what was happening. There are now, in the SDSI program office, notebooks full of the reports of school activities and the minutes of meetings of university facilitators, district coordinators, school staff development committees, and school principals. These provide data on the program at all levels. The school plans and progress reports catalog what happened in each school. The quality and the comprehensiveness of the reports vary. Some schools reported too briefly, almost superficially; that probably grew out of participation in a much looser program in the first years. Brevity certainly was encouraged in the prior program, in which behavioral objectives were used in program proposals and a strict, formal final report was expected. These requirements were standard for all project sites.

Fall 1981 meetings began with an exploratory session to consider how the program could be evaluated. Working with the NCTL director, Dean Scott Westerman of EMU's College of Education convened a group called the Dean's Advisory Council for the Professional Development Program on September 17. Discussion included a wide range of concerns about evaluation. What should be measured? The quality of the staff development program? Whether it got institutionalized? The degree to which teaching or curriculum was improved? How much and how well students learned? There were suggestions that an overall evaluation plan be devised and applied. By the end of the meeting everyone's opinion about evaluation had been covered. The meeting was probably a good first step to find out what various parties wanted in the way of evidence. The group never met again, although a group with representatives from EMU, Wayne State

University, and the intermediate school districts in the area was convened several times to share information about their respective and collaborative efforts. Liaison was also maintained with a similar program at Wayne State University, and assumptions about the relationship of the two programs were developed.

MEETINGS WITH SCHOOL DISTRICT STAFF DEVELOPMENT LEADERS

A second autumn effort was a series of meetings with district coordinators of inservice education/staff development. The purpose was to build a better understanding of the program and to orient the new school and university people. Prior to the meetings the new NCTL staff development coordinator (formerly a district coordinator in the Taylor system) and school people experienced in the program had drafted a handbook on the Taylor Model. The handbook became the centerpiece of discussion. The school and university people saw the effort to put purposes, steps, procedures, and roles in writing as a way to be more definitive about the program. For the NCTL staff it was a chance to be more precise about how the program should operate, for there had been considerable ambiguity. For the Taylor staff it was an opportunity to develop further the model bearing their name. For other public school people interpretations varied: Some thought it tightened the reins; others felt it helped clarify the givens of the program.

GETTING THE ELEMENTS OF THE PROGRAM IN WRITING

In the October 23 report of a district coordinators meeting held on October 20, a first draft of basic assumptions ("givens") was put in writing. Over the year the draft was refined and became the guiding statements on the Taylor Model's six-step process.

The role of the university facilitator was also beginning to get described in writing. A first draft appeared in October.

The efforts to clarify the various dimensions of the program came from several directions. Motivations for clarification varied. Along the way there was, in the background, a power struggle for ownership of the program.

As the year progressed, the management system improved. There were agendas before meetings and records after meetings. Developments in policy were written, always appearing first as a draft. There was, increasingly, more input from participants and more follow-up by NCTL staff. More and more information became available, such as clarification of budget and reporting procedures, ideas for an approach to evaluation, communication of staff development approaches in other schools, and

clarification of relationships with intermediate school district offices and with the similar program at Wayne State University.

Early in the fall there were a couple of casualties and one replacement among university facilitators. After that the number held at seven for the remainder of the year. The university facilitators were finding their niche.

EVALUATION, UBIQUITOUS AND RECURRENT

As more order in and better understanding of the program developed, the program coordinator and the university facilitator became more able to look at what evaluation might involve. They recognized that you have to know what you intend to do before you can evaluate it. They also recognized that evaluation should be an integral part of the program, not just Step 5 in the model. One facilitator observed, for example, that needs assessment was a kind of evaluation. Although there was some resistance to reports and writing, university facilitators were increasingly convinced that documentation was data, and data were needed for evaluation. That was not a universal conviction, even by the end of the year, but much progress was made. Whereas earlier in the year facilitators' reports had been mainly briefs on where a school was in the six-step process, reports in the spring semester became more substantive. They told what school faculties were doing, they included anecdotes to illustrate ideas, and they described procedures and results.

The idea of a handbook was at least temporarily abandoned in January, in favor of a succinct descriptive statement on the program. The statement went through several drafts with input from most of the parties involved.

Progress was slow, but through no fault of any particular individual or group. The slowness was partly a matter of starting an operation with a new team. It was also attributable to changing the rules a bit—or, maybe more accurately, to establishing some rules. Then too, programs as complex as the SDSI program *are* a slow process. That point was reiterated by university facilitators in their year-end evaluations. They especially emphasized that more time was needed in the initial stages of a school project for faculty to explore what they were getting into—what the model called the awareness step.

INVOLVING PRINCIPALS

By midyear it became apparent that the program's emphasis on teacher involvement, important as it was, tended to neglect the importance of principals. The programs in schools in which the principals were not supportive were not making the progress that the schools with supportive principals were making. So planning started in January for a meeting of principals.

Weather in winter 1982 was bad. There were several snow days (school closings). As a result the meeting of principals had to be postponed until April 21. The turnout was good and the meeting was a great success—almost a surprise to NCTL staff and university facilitators.

Parenthetically it must be said that winter 1982 in Michigan was more than a climatic disaster; it was also bad for morale and spirit. Depression, economic and psychological, was the mood. One would hardly have expected a meeting of principals on staff development to be upbeat. But it was, because the programs in the buildings these principals administered were working.

The principals talked about what staff development involved in their building. The activities they identified went far beyond traditional concepts of staff development. The link of staff development to school improvement was not as clear at it might have been, but that was probably no more unusual there than anywhere else in the country. Principals also discussed their role in staff development. Several reported having shifted from a directing role to a working-with-teachers role. There were reports of better morale, fewer discipline problems, better staff meetings, fewer complaints from teachers, and staff development goals being met. The third-party role of EMU, in the person of the university facilitator, was recognized as important and catalytic.

The meeting of principals served as one type of evaluation of the program, and there were no major negative comments. It also convinced the NCTL staff and the facilitators that future program starts should require more than the principal's approval of the staff development model; they should include some assurance of the principal's willingness and interest to participate. The participation chart (see Table 2 in Chapter 1) developed at midyear to indicate level of involvement may need some further elaboration by NCTL staff.

EVALUATION AND DOCUMENTATION

As each week and month passed in the 1981–82 school year, there were accomplishments. The steps of the EMU model for staff development were under continuous scrutiny. University facilitators learned quickly that the first step, awareness, often required more time; trust levels needed to be developed. They also began exploring different approaches to needs assessment, and they admitted initial discomfort with their efforts at needs assessment. Program proposals, once the high point of the process, were reassessed for what they were—plans—and more emphasis was put on implementation. Gradually an evaluation design evolved. At the time of this writing, it was not fully implemented. School projects that began in 1981–82 bought into a staff development model that had no established

evaluation design, so they were completing their plan consistent with the status of the model at the time they voted to participate. Some projects took to using the evaluation design. Data collected according to the specifications of the design appear to have promise; however, orientation is needed to the design and the kind of reporting it requires.

The whole approach to documentation and evaluation is gradually employing more system and structure. University facilitators have expressed interest in the research dimensions, particularly in an ethnographic approach to data collection and evaluation. A paper discussing qualitative research and ethnographic approaches was developed to promote further examination of more precise and deliberate ways to collect data and to evaluate (see the Appendix).

Another attempt to document and evaluate progress is this monograph, which presents the views of various participants in the program—a teacher, a principal, a district coordinator, several university facilitators, and NCTL staff. Each of the chapters gives some concrete evidence of the success of the program. Many are rich with illustrations and anecdotes of staff development procedures and results.

THE UNIVERSITY FACILITATOR'S ROLE

The importance and the significance of university participation in the program were reported from almost all quarters. A major reason cited by several participants for university involvement was the value of a skilled, informed, neutral party in a school-building staff development activity. A notable shortcoming in the university facilitator's role was that of broker of (or linker to) university resources. Several university facilitators admitted they did not know the range and the wealth of university resources; all recognized the need to become more conversant with what the university had to offer.

Year-end reports by university facilitators and school staff development committees showed evidence of skills being developed in documentation. Several reports were rich in the details of events and outcomes in a school. University facilitators, particularly, became skillful in writing comprehensive reports. Apparently they were also stimulated by their work with schools, some commenting that fieldwork was the highlight of their academic year.

One instance of the university facilitators' growth was their recognition of the special skills necessary for their work. Significant was the contrast between how the facilitators expressed the criteria for their job early in the school year and how they stated the requirements in June. The June statement demonstrated thoughtful growth in awareness of the facilitator's role.

The university facilitators built a wholesome feeling about their function. The role became much more clear as a result of a year's experience.

Facilitators reported a number of ways in which they made progress, and some of the results:

"We've made progress in breaking down the ivory-tower image of the university."

"We were hung up with the six-step process at first; now we're looking more at behavior changes [in teachers] and school improvement."

"We are really helping some schools; it's not just a pass-through of money."

"We have given our university an example of something that can be done to reestablish contact with public schools."

"This program has improved the quality of my work life."

There are improvements still to be made in the role of the facilitator and in the program. University facilitators identified a number of them. For example:

"We need to develop the capacity to use the university as a resource bank."

"The principal needs to become a more central person in the program."

"Superintendents need to be informed more extensively."

"Recording information, documentation, and evaluation need a lot more work."

Facilitators, of course, are just that—facilitators. They assist the staff development and school-improvement process. The central players are teachers and administrators. What happened to them and, as a consequence, to the school program?

THE RESULTS AT THE SCHOOL-BUILDING LEVEL

Progress by teachers and administrators (mainly principals) seemed to fall into three broad categories: (1) better communications and improved working relationships, (2) greater identity and a better self-image as a faculty, and (3) improved curriculum and program.

In the first category teachers, administrators, and facilitators reported an increase in communication and more sharing, improved teacher-principal relationships, and more cooperation and collaboration. One teacher said, "Coming together for the committee work and the inservices has not only raised our morale, but also given us a kind of network on which to build in the future." A principal said, "Maybe there were times when I did make unilateral decisions, where now I'd probably stop and think about it and get people involved."

In the identity-self-image category, reports mentioned more unity

among staff, a general coming together of faculty, more talking back and forth, more-pervasive humor, and the development of a positive school atmosphere. A teacher reported,

> We're beginning to know each other's personalities better. Just in the business of being a group certain kinds of roles are emerging with certain people. An illustration [is] that there's always someone who brings us back to task if we go astray. There's always somebody who will take the role of the devil's advocate. There's always somebody who will argue a point on their own behalf.

Another teacher said that the staff development program in her school had "developed a better sense of professionalism." Several teachers commented that "the school has become more of a community."

The curriculum and program accomplishments that were cited included teachers developing an ownership of and a commitment to improve the school program, department members talking together about what they wanted to accomplish and finding agreements about what curriculum should be. One faculty member reported that redesigning the system for reporting student progress had made the faculty realize anew that they needed to know what they were teaching and what their expectations for students were. A university facilitator reported that in one school

> low scores on the MEAP test for fourth grade revealed a problem in mathematics. A number of mathematic concepts on the test were not [being] included in classroom instruction. Revisions have been planned for next year to correct the problem.

A teacher said,

> If I understand the research we heard correctly, kids don't learn as well when those things [reading, writing, speaking, and listening] are fragmented as they do if they are taught [together] in a single semester. So obviously a slight problem with the committee is trying to decide just how much of that is going to influence our curriculum.

Some of the progress was in establishing policy. One school staff reported developing a set of procedures for the use of their new media center. Another described policy for a new student-progress reporting system developed with parent input. A staff development committee in a junior high developed policy for a student- and parent-orientation program.

The curriculum and program accomplishments covered a wide spectrum of staff and program needs, many more than are traditionally included in staff development. The reason may have been the emphasis on school improvement and the recognition that school improvement was more than staff development.

The reporting was more descriptive than the usual data collected on staff development programs. Describing and illustrating progress with anecdotes and vignettes developed gradually over the last school year. Year-end reports from the staff development committees and the facilitators showed progress in descriptive documentation. The evaluation design developed during 1981–82 encouraged that approach. It also called for citing relationships between what the staff learned and (a) changes in the teachers' behavior, (b) curriculum changes, and (c) the impact on the students and the community. Although progress has been made and the data clearly indicate achievement, more attention to documentation and evaluation is needed. Further orientation of all personnel involved should be undertaken so that the validity of the EMU model and procedures can be more precisely demonstrated.

THE RESULTS IN STUDENT LEARNING

We can cite only some general results of the program in student learning and achievement. Teachers reported these results, for example:

"Children were motivated to improve."

"Children are showing progress as a result of extra help [from parent volunteers selected and trained in the program]."

"Positive behavior was learned by students."

"Many children finished other classroom assignments quickly and correctly so that they were able to earn as a reward extra time on the computer."

"There was great enthusiasm in the children."

There was far more evidence of the impact on the students than anyone reported. The job is to get all professional participants to document the evidence.

NEEDED ATTENTION TO DOCUMENTATION AND EVALUATION

More can be known about all levels of accomplishment in this model of staff development, but it will take more time, higher priority for documentation, the training of participants, more and better record keeping, and an increase in budget. The current results are promising enough to make such an investment defensible. In my view this is one of the best designs for staff development in the country. It uses school, university, and intermediate district talents and resources, and it is carefully arranged to provide for both teacher and administrator participation in decision making.

Some observations and recommendations follow. There is no significance or particular logic to the order in which they appear.

OBSERVATIONS

1. The six-step EMU model does not always work sequentially. For example, if a particular plan becomes inappropriate in the implementation stage, it may need to be changed, and that means a return to planning. Or the original needs assessment may reveal mainly surface needs, what people are willing to admit. A few months into the project more basic needs may surface, and that may require reassessing needs in the implementation stage.

2. There are usually intended results and benefits in a project, and they, of course, should be recognized. Everything cannot be planned, however. There are almost always unintended results, sometimes good, sometimes bad. Unintended results may on occasion be more important than what is planned. For example, a project may do wonders in improving staff morale when the official objective is developing a more coordinated approach to helping students learn to write.

3. University facilitator is a new role for university professors—a very significant role, both practically and academically. It provides work for university faculty as declining enrollments in colleges of education create an oversupply of faculty. It also helps universities make their resources more accessible.

4. Often the results of a staff development program were reported without evidence of precisely what the outcome involved or how the result was accomplished. The way staff or school improvement is achieved may be at least as important as the outcome.

5. Documenting as a project proceeds helps provide data. Too many projects did not make documentation a continuous integral part of their program. Hence data were not available for either project decision making or evaluation.

6. The role of the district coordinator was unclear in a number of districts. Sometimes the district coordinator assisted in a very important way in which only a local person could. Sometimes the district coordinator hampered university access to a school. The role needs examination.

7. Having short descriptions of school-building staff development projects on file would be helpful to the teachers and the principals in new projects. Even continuing projects would appreciate a look at what others have done.

8. Often the opinions of participants in a particular project varied. Teachers and principals too frequently saw different opinions as detrimental to harmonious progress. The tendency was to avoid conflict. Yet conflict can be used in very productive ways, and skills in the effective use of

conflict can be a by-product of a staff development project. Staff development for school improvement is a political process, among others, and differing educational and political views make for a healthy, dynamic system.

9. Visiting schools where something interesting and different was going on seemed to work as one way for teachers to learn, but only a few projects sought out and visited other schools.

10. Time was obviously an important factor in almost all projects. Teachers needed time to engage in staff development and school improvement. The number of schools using project money to free teachers (by hiring substitutes) to carry out the project was evidence of this.

11. The six-step model seemed to be taken for granted at many sites. There should be more attention to its value and its effectiveness. The model has been an evolving concept. If it is to continue evolving and improving, if it is to remain a dynamic process, evidence of its effectiveness is needed.

12. The rhythm of school-building projects got very little attention. For example, the high and low levels of activity and enthusiasm were seldom mentioned. Yet there were problems at most sites in maintaining momentum, problems which leaders needed to deal with. More knowledge about maintaining momentum is needed.

13. The EMU project's expectations for institutionalization in one year may be too ambitious. It probably takes two or three years before a new or different practice becomes part of a school faculty's regular procedure.

14. University facilitators work on an overload basis, and they are almost always overworked. Although energy levels vary greatly and the time individuals have to devote to professional activity differs, the job of the university facilitator cannot get sufficient attention on an overload basis. The issue is not only the time available to a professor after he or she meets university obligations; it is also the apparent value that the university ascribes to the university facilitator's role. When the university facilitator's job must be taken on in addition to a full-time job, it obviously is not viewed as very significant, difficult, time-consuming, or important. The job (serving as facilitator in one school), in fact, takes more time than teaching one college course does.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The program should get going earlier in the school year. Most projects should run from September through June, with renewal possible.

2. The evaluation design should be a given in any new project. The training and the support necessary to ensure valid, regular documentation should be provided.

3. The discrepancies between the facilitators' and the staff development committees' reports should be reviewed, and, if possible, the differences in perception should be explained, or at least there should be an attempt to understand them.

4. The move away from stilted, sterile reports should be continued. The reports should tell more than the details of procedures and steps; they should tell what happened to the people and the program.

5. Work should begin on what determines the adequacy of a staff development program. The parameters of legitimate staff development in the program should be determined.

6. There should be more attention to the future impact of the program—for example, what follow-up is needed, how durability of changes can be tested, how the model can be extended to other buildings, and what reports need to be made to boards of education.

7. A system of funding should be set up that calls for some matching funds from the school district. This will require a commitment on the part of the school.

8. EMU money should be made available on the basis of how many teachers are involved in each school.

9. Graduate students should be involved with the university facilitators. The projects can provide a marvelous training ground for anyone studying teaching, supervision, or curriculum development.

10. Some sort of apprenticeship should be considered for new university facilitators.

11. There should be visiting across the projects by the participants to promote sharing and to stimulate thinking about what is possible.

12. Possible relationships with preservice programs (particularly student teaching) should be explored, and there should be discussion of how preservice and inservice education might complement and supplement each other.

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Appendix

The Role of Qualitative Methods in Evaluation

Ronald G. Corwin

The social sciences have been torn by recurring disputes between the advocates of competing methodologies and approaches to knowledge. The early research in sociology, for example, included historical accounts, statistical analyses, case studies of communities and neighborhoods, and other forms of scholarship. By the 1940s statistical "empiricism"—an inductive approach to knowledge based on systematic observations of specific facts—had gained dominance. It still holds sway, but other approaches to knowledge have managed to maintain a strong foothold. In particular, the dual philosophy called holistic phenomenology has always provided challenging alternatives to empiricism. Holism is the belief that a whole cannot be reduced to its discrete parts; events must be understood as part of a larger context. Phenomenology is a set of assumptions about the mutable, changing nature of reality; facts can be interpreted from different perspectives, and reality is too complex and fluid to be captured in simple statistics. Today the debate between empiricism and holism takes the form of arguments for and against "quantitative" methods such as random sampling, structured interviews, questionnaires, and testing techniques, and "qualitative" methods such as participant observation, ethnography, content analysis, and open-ended interviews.

THE THEOLOGY OF RESEARCH

These methodological disputes can assume the fervor of religious wars. The gods are the theorists, who are praised with endless quotations, footnotes, and *ibid.* after *ibid.* They, in turn, sanctify lofty presentations. Many social scientists seem to listen to Compte, who proclaimed an awesome triumph when he decided that sociology was the "queen of the sciences" (Corwin, 1981). The high priests are the statisticians, who set impossible

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standards and chastise those who do not measure up. They also provide for absolution through the magic of method. Practitioners of social research are pressured to choose between the denominations, which themselves are riddled with sectarian rivalries. It is difficult to remain neutral. At the same time, the very fact that these struggles persist means that no one approach has yet monopolized social research, the claims of apologists for the different camps notwithstanding.

METHODS AS TRUTH STRATEGIES

The moralistic tone of these disputes sometimes obscures the fact that there are several equally legitimate, competing paradigms. Research methodology is sometimes discussed as though there were only one correct approach to social science, all other approaches being substandard and hence of lower quality. But in reality there are different "truth strategies" that are rooted in diverse intellectual traditions. Although particular traditions gain favor from time to time, all traditions have a legitimate role to play in social research. Thompson and his colleagues (1960) once identified four basic types of truth strategies. The following table is an adaptation of their typology.

Truth Strategy	Reliance on Sensory Experience	Types of Reasoning	Examples
Scientific-quantitative	High	Codified	Experimentation (psychology)
Analytic-quantitative	Low	Codified	Statistics (demography)
Qualitative field research	High	Uncodified	Ethnography (anthropology)
Inspirational-qualitative scholarship	Low	Uncodified	Historical scholarship and literature synthesis (the humanities)

At one extreme is the scientific type. High reliance is placed on systematic observations (factual data) and codified reasoning. Experimental psychology is an illustration. At the other extreme is a more inspirational or speculative mode. Conclusions can be based on careful scholarship, but they are not directly induced from carefully controlled observations, and they are largely uncodified. There are two intermediate types. The analytic mode uses abstract and codified knowledge forms, as illustrated by mathematics. Qualitative field research relies on data that are largely uncodified but can be directly confirmed through sensory experience, as in the practice of cultural anthropology.

Although particular disciplines are associated with different approaches to research, all types of truth strategies are present in most social science

disciplines, with varying degrees of legitimation and prominence. Even within educational research, which was virtually monopolized by the scientific truth strategy prior to the 1960s, one can now readily observe a variety of competing paradigms.

Contributions of Each Truth Strategy

Each truth strategy offers distinctive advantages. The codified modes of inquiry (the scientific and the analytic) are most useful with very focused studies, confined to a few precisely measured, logically related variables derived from general propositions. They are helpful for extending abstract, hierarchically organized theory; specific events are treated as representative of general classes of events. Because the main utility of these approaches is to contribute to an abstract system of knowledge, they usually provide only incomplete and fragmentary information about the objects studied.

The inspirational mode is useful for providing perspective. It establishes historical and intellectual context. Through the synthesis of research studies and the integration of field research with theory, this approach helps scholars maintain continuity with theoretical and scholarly traditions. Also, through critical reviews of existing work this approach guides improvement and suggests new perspectives.

In uncodified qualitative field research, one collects a wide variety of descriptive information pertaining to some social unit, such as a group, a community organization, a program, or a project. The variables and the focus of inquiry are very broad because the primary objective is to understand the social unit itself. Abstract concepts are systematically employed as means of describing and helping to interpret specific patterns of events. When the inquiry is closely tied to systematic observation, this approach can be a valuable source of new directions for seeking information and a source of general propositions and speculations. The success of this approach can be measured in terms of how accurately specific situations are portrayed.

Other advantages of qualitative methods are the rich detail that can be obtained, the possibility of gaining insights that can lead to more formal hypotheses, the opportunity to empathize with participants, the opportunity to gain a sense of the affective dimensions of a situation that quantitative approaches would miss, the possibility of tracing short-term complicated processes, and the possibility of reconstructing complex situations in a holistic way. This latter advantage can be especially significant because it allows the investigator to construct *stories* from human events and experiences that can be easily understood, remembered, and communicated to many types of audiences.

Information derived from qualitative fieldwork also can be used to guide the design and the analysis of more formal statistical approaches such as surveys (Seiber, 1973). For example, detailed knowledge about a situation can be used to identify meaningful cases and samples for more systematic research. To illustrate, Seiber decided to include different schools in his study of a suburban school system after, as a participant and an observer, he had learned of the effects of migration on that system. As another instance, in a study of the Teacher Corps (Corwin, 1973) my research team and I were able to make sense out of certain statistical relationships only after we returned to the field sites and talked informally with some of our informants. Also, puzzling replies to a questionnaire were clarified by examining the field notes of some of our observers.

TYPES OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The primary purpose of introducing the foregoing typology of truth strategies is to place qualitative field research in context. The remainder of my discussion will attempt to provide a better understanding of this poorly understood type of research, so that its potential contributions to social research, and to evaluation in particular, can be better appreciated.

Definition and Purpose

Qualitative field research is a form of investigation that employs observations of and unstructured interviews with people in a setting or a context in order to understand their everyday ongoing activities as they experience those activities. It is empirical in the sense that the observer is open-minded and uses facts inductively to describe specific situations. But the approach is also holistic and phenomenological in the sense that the investigator attempts to understand the meaning of events to the participants, and to understand their views. The influence of the total context on situations is of utmost importance in arriving at any conclusions.

The ultimate purpose of qualitative methods is to add to existing experience and humanistic *understanding* (Stake, 1978). Qualitative approaches have the advantage of organizing facts so as to preserve the unitary, holistic character of the complex and unique situations and events being described. The myriad details and variables involved cannot be easily isolated. Although the underlying themes and hypotheses are important, they remain subordinate to understanding the situation as a whole. Understanding is based on an explanation, but it is not necessarily the same as the explanation. Explanation takes the form of logically related propositions stating proven facts, whereas understanding is more intuitive, even though observations, comparisons, and examples may be employed.

Von Wright (1971) captured the essence of the distinction between explanation and understanding in the following statement:

> Practically every explanation, be it causal or teleological or of some other kind, can be said to further our understanding of things. But "understanding" also has a psychological ring which "explanation" has not . . . Simmel . . . thought that understanding as a method characteristic of the humanities is a form of *empathy* or re-creation in the mind of the scholar of the mental atmosphere, the thoughts and feelings and motivations, of the objects of his study. (as quoted in Stake, 1978, p. 6)

Butterfield (1951) reminded us that

> the only understanding we ever reach in history is but a refinement, more or less subtle and sensitive, of the difficult—and sometimes deceptive—process of imagining oneself in another person's place. (as quoted in Stake, 1978, p. 7)

Types of Qualitative Field Techniques

A wide range of qualitative techniques have been employed. This variety sometimes has been a source of confusion. It is worth noting some distinctions to avoid some of the serious communication problems that have occurred when researchers have attempted to adapt some of these techniques for purposes of evaluation.

Descriptive research. Descriptive research encompasses a variety of techniques:

Documentation—written or pictorial evidence that key events have occurred or products have been produced. For example, the investigator might collect calendars of events, rosters of persons who attended meetings, completed reports, and specimens of newly developed curriculum material.

Descriptive accounts of events—narrative reports from participants and other observers about specific events that have occurred. For example, the investigator might interview key informants who attended a meeting, used curriculum materials, or participated in a series of inservice meetings, in order to learn what happened as they observed it. As another alternative, participants might be asked to provide written accounts of what happened at particular events.

Content analysis—systematic counts of references made to specific types of events contained in minutes of meetings, telephone logs, letters, diaries and field notes kept by participants, and similar documents. For example, the investigator might examine minutes of a committee meeting to identify the persons who were most active in a project or the persons who were opposed to using certain procedures.

Interaction analysis—systematic accounts of patterns of relationships among persons. For example, an observer might systematically note who speaks to whom, who gives orders to others, who asks questions, how many participants speak out at a meeting, how many people in a discussion speak simultaneously, or how many arguments occur in a group or organization over a given period of time and how those arguments are distributed.

Illuminative evaluation. This term applies to several approaches that take into account the wider context of a program. Parlett and Dearden (1977) stated, "Its primary concern is with description and interpretation rather than with measurement prediction . . . [It] attempts to discover what it is like to be participating . . . and to address and illuminate a complex array of questions . . . ." (p. 13). Again it is possible to identify several components:

Postspecification of variables, outcomes, and problem areas—An investigator does not begin an evaluation with fixed ideas about which variables will be important or what outcomes can be expected from a program. Rather, during the course of the evaluation a continuing effort is made to develop a systematic, focused research design. The investigator attempts to identify a pool of variables and outcomes that are potentially important and then wittles them down to a few well-defined concepts and measures as the evaluation progresses.

Conceptual organization—The investigator attempts to synthesize descriptive research by integrating and interpreting specific events. An attempt is made to reach some general conclusions inductively by identifying general patterns of events and relationships that emerge from independent descriptions of specific situations.

Theoretical explanations—The investigator employs abstract concepts and general theories to interpret facts and observed events. The investigator attempts to derive formal hypotheses from patterns of events noted in a study. In addition, the investigator remains alert to how findings from the study fit general theory or can contribute to it. For example, the investigator might classify reactions to an innovation on the basis of general theories of social change, or propose modifications of existing theories of change based on what happened in the course of a project.

Ethnographic approaches. Researchers have sometimes adapted ethnographic techniques for purposes of evaluation. The use of *ethnographic techniques*, no matter how useful they may prove to be, should not be confused with *ethnography*. Ethnography is a rigorous and systematic type of field research. In essence, an outside observer becomes immersed in a situation for long periods in order to understand the participants' value

frameworks and the meanings of their actions. Some studies have been inappropriately labeled ethnographies when observers were on site for only a few days (Fetterman, 1982).

When doing ethnography, the investigator is guided by the insider's perspective, and interpretations are holistic in that the interrelated nature of the system and the total context is stressed (Wilson, 1977). Wilson described some of the complexities involved in this method as follows:

> The data gathered by participant observation is significantly different from that gathered by other methods. The researcher links together the information he gathers by various methods in a way that is nearly impossible with other approaches, and he has access to some unique kinds of information. For instance, he compares the following: (a) what a [person] says in response to a question; (b) what he says to other people; (c) what he says in various situations; (d) what he says at various times; (e) what he actually does; (f) various non-verbal signals about the matter (for example, body postures); (g) what those who are significant to the person feel, say and do about the matter. Furthermore, the participant observer in interviewing knows much about the persons or incidents referred to in the answers to his questions. Finally, the participant observer cultivates an empathetic understanding with the participant that is nearly impossible with quantitative methods. The researcher shares the daily life of participants and systematically works to understand their feelings and reactions. (pp. 256–257)

But although the participant-observer learns to empathize with participants and to appreciate their points of view, he or she strives to remain neutral, to avoid using a judgmental framework, and to avoid rooting for a particular outcome that will solve a predetermined problem. In this respect the observer differs from the participant. Understanding the points of view of participants is not the same as accepting their beliefs and absorbing their values.

Wilson went on to point out that an investigator will learn to anticipate where and when significant events will occur or be discussed informally, and will be there to note verbal and nonverbal behavior. The investigator will also learn the history of the situation and add new bits of information to it as a situation unfolds, and he or she will ask people to help develop and refine an interpretation or a theory.

All of this requires so much time and energy that it is often difficult to combine ethnography with other approaches without considerable adaptation and compromise, although ethnography has been employed in nearly a dozen major evaluations of educational projects.[1]

1. For example, the Experimental Schools Project, the Urban Desegregation Schools Project, the Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study, the Youth in National Policy Study, an alternative school project, the Experimental Based Career Exploration Project, and the Career Intern Program (Fetterman, 1982).

QUALITATIVE APPROACHES AND ALTERNATIVE EVALUATION MODELS

Unless one fully grasps the complexity of evaluation research, one cannot develop an adequate appreciation of the contributions qualitative field methods can make to it. For the purpose of this paper it is imperative to consider what the evaluation process entails. As applied to social programs and projects, evaluation is apparently thought of in at least three different ways, which will be referred to here as evaluation models. These models seem to form a continuum that ranges from simple and naive at one extreme to complex and sophisticated at the other.

The Program-Fidelity Model

Initially the model used to evaluate social problems was based on engineering and product-testing practices. Rigorous scientific approaches are well suited to this model. In fact, people undoubtedly have it in mind when they advocate testing and other highly focused program-evaluation designs. However, the model is very simple, and it quickly proved to be inappropriate when applied to social projects. Policy makers and evaluation researchers insisted that a program have explicit, measurable goals against which to measure outcomes. Accordingly, successful implementation meant a faithful reproduction of the original design. This approach did not properly recognize the fact that initial plans had to be adjusted to specific situations.

The Mutual-Adaptation Model

Because of this shortcoming of the program-fidelity model, in 1977 when Berman and McLaughlin criticized the model and proposed instead that implementation was a process of "mutual adaptation," they struck a responsive chord in the evaluation research community. According to the mutual-adaptation model, putting an idea or a plan into practice is more complicated than following a recipe. The investigator must remain alert to how the original project design needs to be modified in particular situations, how plans can be improved, or how the entire project can be modified to achieve the original or emergent goals more effectively.

However, the mutual-adaptation approach is not far removed from the old idea of program fidelity. It does not adequately stress the possibility that ambiguities, flaws, inconsistencies, and rigidities in the original design itself can be major stumbling blocks. In practice, many planned interventions are not "plans" so much as general guides to strategies for change that are deliberately left imprecise and vague to provide for necessary flexibility and spontaneous results.

The Evolutionary Model

In recognition of these facts, some writers have come to think of implementation in still a third way—as an *evolutionary process* (Farrar et al., 1979). In other words, a project can undergo so much change and modification that the ideas and the plans that served as the initial guides no longer seem relevant. New and often better projects emerge in the process.

There seem to be two interacting but distinct kinds of evolution. One can be called institutional drift, which is the result of accumulation of many unplanned actions. There are many reasons why plans can go awry: They need to be interpreted; people lose sight of goals in the press of day-to-day problems; outside pressures constrain and deflect the project; the sovereign actions of members, seeking to cope with fluctuating outside demands, often unintentionally commit projects to new lines of action; and, perhaps most important, organizations often lose their memories because of turnover and the premium placed on new initiatives.

The second kind of evolution grows out of deliberate compromise between groups that have different ideas about a project—its goals, the preferred procedure, the expected outcomes, and the like. This form of evolution is a product of tensions and sometimes overt conflicts that can be expected to arise in social interventions.

The evolutionary model has important implications for the relevance and viability of the different truth strategies that have already been discussed. The notion that project implementation is a process of evolution alerts the investigator to look for unintended as well as intended consequences and to identify the negative outcomes that need correction as well as to find ways to build on and reinforce the unexpected positive results. Ultimately the evolutionary process can be fostered by researchers themselves as they gain creative insights that can lead to completely new project designs and goals. Qualitative field research methods are ideally suited to all of these challenges.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this paper is to suggest that although social scientists sometimes convey the impression that there is only one correct scientific method, in practice there are several valid approaches to social research, all of which have a legitimate role to play in the evaluation of social programs and projects. Each truth strategy offers distinct advantages and is suited to different purposes. Qualitative field methods are especially well suited to the task of evaluating open-ended, adaptive, and evolutionary social interventions. The varied techniques associated with qualitative approaches provide insight and empathy that cannot be gleaned through

any other method. They are particularly sensitive to emergent goals and problems and to unanticipated positive and negative outcomes that are usually associated with social intervention. This kind of information is essential to understand fully the impact of an intervention and to make the necessary adjustments to strengthen and improve the project design.

Because so much emphasis has been given here to the contributions of qualitative approaches, it seems appropriate in closing to return to the question of how the truth strategies are related to one another. As already noted, the approaches are typically used by themselves, in their pure form. One good reason for this is that they serve different purposes. Also, each form of research makes special demands on the investigator; that is, each form requires special data, unique methods of data collection, and the like. Moreover, the conclusions reached from different approaches are subject to different types of qualifications and reservations. Consequently any effort to employ multiple methods within a single eclectic research design must confront practical questions about how to synthesize findings based on different assumptions. More important, when using more than one approach, the investigator must adapt fragments of sovereign methodologies and thus run the risk of misusing the techniques.

However, the purist approach also carries with it certain costs, including the arrogance alluded to at the beginning of this paper. Dogmatic rhetoric in praise of qualitative methods is no more justifiable than the orthodoxies of quantitative methods—especially because the major strides in the sciences seem to be closely tied to quantitative approaches.

Given the different contributions of each truth strategy, approaches should be selected pragmatically to fit the problem and the investigator's purposes, and, insofar as possible, the approaches should be used in conjunction, to reinforce one another. The advantages of eclectic research designs incorporating a combination of approaches outweigh the risks of compromising any given approach.

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